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## Remembering to be Faithful: The Role of Humility in the Revitalization of Pentecostal Churches

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GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

REMEMBERING TO BE FAITHFUL:  
THE ROLE OF HUMILITY IN THE REVITALIZATION  
OF PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF GEORGE FOX EVANGELICAL SEMINARY  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

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THE ROLE OF HUMILITY IN THE REVITALIZATION OF  
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## ABSTRACT

Title: REMEMBERING TO BE FAITHFUL: THE ROLE OF HUMILITY IN THE REVITALIZATION OF PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES

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This dissertation addresses spiritual revitalization of Pentecostal churches. This paper's thesis is that the revitalization of Pentecostal churches must begin with the recovery of the early Pentecostals' passion and urgency.

Knowledge of the antecedents affords a clear understanding of the early Pentecostal movement. Chapter 1 examines the spiritual decline in the decades leading up to the birth of Pentecostalism. The chapter considers the causes of decline, the dynamics of renewal, and concludes by introducing key figures in restoration movements in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Chapter 2 explores the passions of the Pentecostal forerunners in their own words. This chapter is organized around the four central doctrines: salvation, baptism in the Holy Spirit, divine healing, and the second coming of Christ.

Chapters 3 and 4 focus on early Pentecostalism. Chapter 3 describes the rise of Pentecostalism at the Azusa Street revival. The story is built around two key figures:

Charles Parham and William J. Seymour. Chapter 4 focuses on the urgencies and passions of the participants in the Azusa Street revival. It uses firsthand accounts to describe the experience of the participants. In researching this chapter, insistence on humility emerged as the key passion that informed every other passion at Azusa Street. This chapter, therefore, uses humility as the lens through which to view the revival. After an examination of the biblical concept of humility, this chapter describes the facilities and activities of the Azusa Street revival from the perspective of humility.

Chapter 5 offers concluding reflections on humility as an agent for the revitalization of Pentecostal churches. It considers how contemporary Pentecostals might re-appropriate the early Pentecostal passion for humility in their own search for renewed Pentecostal vitality.



## INTRODUCTION

Pastor Ted grew increasingly uncomfortable as the worship service progressed. Because Pastor Ted was a Pentecostal minister, nothing going on around him was unfamiliar. The people behind him were exclaiming, "Praise the Lord! Thank you Jesus!" Around him were the muffled sounds of people speaking in tongues. Some were shouting with exuberance and others were groaning with longing, while the worship leader was booming, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus; thank you Lord! Thank you Lord! Thank you Lord!" The whole setting suddenly seemed strange and surreal. Pastor Ted's mind raced. "Why do I feel out of place here? Here I am a Pentecostal minister, yet I am reacting strongly against Pentecostal worship. Is it because I'm on vacation and unplugged from my ministerial role? Is it because I'm a visitor here and don't know these people? I've got to get out of here. I can't stand this."

Pastor Ted wondered if he was being too judgmental. Nevertheless, he could not escape his thoughts. The expressions of worship sounded shallow and strangely rote and the worship leader's style seemed contrived. Later, Ted told his wife, Denise, "I don't doubt the sincerity of the people, and I can't judge their hearts, but it felt as though the whole goal was to make a lot of noise in hopes that God would do something powerful and exciting in their midst. I wondered whether they were worshipping God or trying to conjure God." Pastor Ted could never envision not being Pentecostal, but that morning he felt completely out of place in worship.

Pastor Ted reflected on his own ministry. He had been the pastor of Cedar Hill Full Gospel Church, a small New England church in a small New England town, for over then years. Over its thirty-year history the church has been subdued in its worship style, and has not emphasized Pentecostal doctrines and practices such as baptism in the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. Worship services are restrained compared to what Pastor Ted experienced in other Pentecostal churches.

Early in his ministry at Cedar Hill Church, Pastor Ted attributed the subdued character of the church to several factors. First, the church is located in conservative New England. Second, the church has never been strongly Pentecostal in practice. Third, most of the people were not from a Pentecostal background prior to coming to the church. In fact, the vast majority of the congregation was uninformed about the church's Pentecostal heritage.

Over the past ten years, the congregation has grown, strengthened, and stabilized. Though it had long been lacking in joy and flagging in zeal, the church has steadily regained vitality. Now Pastor Ted was beginning to see that church members desired more in their relationship with God. Some were reluctant and wary of emotionalism and doctrinal aberration, but most were eager for spiritual renewal.

Pastor Ted found himself in a quandary. His personal Pentecostal experience and heritage were precious and spiritually nurturing, yet he did not know how to pass on that Pentecostal heritage. He was uncomfortable with what he perceived as an improper emphasis on external behaviors in the worship service he attended while on vacation, but he did not feel he had any better answers for his own congregation. Nevertheless, Pastor

Ted had a golden opportunity. The people of Cedar Hill Church had a growing spiritual hunger, while being unencumbered by preconceived ideas about what it meant to be Pentecostal.

If anything, the challenge before Ted was to help the congregation mine the riches of the Pentecostal tradition. For those congregants without a Pentecostal background, this would be an exercise in discovering a Pentecostal identity. For those with a background in Pentecostal faith and practice, this would be an exercise in revitalizing their Pentecostal identity.

The need for revitalization is not unique to Pastor Ted's congregation. Thomas Trask and David Womack discuss the concern to recapture Pentecostal vitality in *Back to the Altar*. Womack writes, "The old paths are gone, and we have few people left who remember where those paths once began or where they used to lead. With the passing of generations, we can no longer depend upon our memories of the early Pentecostal movement but must experience a new spiritual awakening for the twenty-first century."<sup>1</sup> Trask, who served as the General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God, concurs, "As I traveled to district councils and ministers institutes, the Lord allowed me to sense and see the need for a new vitality in our Fellowship."<sup>2</sup> Trask describes the core of the problem: "Early in the twentieth century the Pentecostal movement was born in a great explosion of spiritual power as the church rediscovered the baptism in the Holy Spirit and original, New Testament, apostolic, Pentecostal Christianity. . . . With each passing year,

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas E. Trask and David A. Womack, *Back to the Altar* (Springfield, MO: Gospel, 1994), 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

the spiritual intensity of the original revival is diluted.”<sup>3</sup> He emphasizes the need for Pentecostal revitalization and asks, “How could a movement that once was the fastest-growing church in the world find itself in the awful condition that in one twelve-month period it took an average of four churches to add one new person to our Fellowship’s Sunday morning church attendance?”<sup>4</sup>

Simon Chan points to the need for revitalization when he describes Pentecostalism as suffering from spiritual fatigue. He points to signs of waning zeal and missionary vision and includes published reports that the Assemblies of God in the United States is stagnant. He references the social research of Margaret Poloma, which indicates that the Assemblies of God is undergoing a phase of development that Max Weber called the “routinization of charisma.”<sup>5</sup> Chan writes:

Even though glossolalia is a central doctrine, statistics show that a sizeable number of AG [Assemblies of God] adherents do not speak in tongues or have stopped doing so. . . . Signs of panic are also apparent. On the one hand, the “establishment” Pentecostals appear more and more to align themselves with the fundamentalists. Attempts at reintroducing the King James Bible and censuring ministers involved in ecumenical dialogue are perhaps indicative of a leadership that feels that it is slowly losing its grip. Hard-core dogmatism is always self-reassuring! On the other hand, those who are feeling the “routinization of charisma” are searching desperately for new experiences. Where do they turn but to places where a lot of action seems to be going on: Toronto, Pensacola and a host of independent charismatic churches? But what the seekers are offered there are mostly exciting experiences whose novelty quickly wears off and which have to be replaced by new experiences. We have here a religious version of the

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>5</sup> Simon Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 8.

fashion world. The typical Pentecostal-charismatic church today is far from being a “contrast community”; it is in fact the epitome of modern culture.<sup>6</sup>

Two factors influence the concern of this paper’s author to see Pentecostal congregations revitalized. The first reason is personal. The author came to faith in Christ during his teenage years. In the early 1970s, the Charismatic Movement was in full swing and Pentecostals led the author of this paper to Jesus and taught him Christian faith. His Christian understanding and experience are defined by a Pentecostal/Charismatic ethos and he finds the sense of divine immanence and the feeling of expectation that accompanied it felt fresh and exciting.

Over the years, the author witnessed another side of the Pentecostal experience as he encountered things that did not ring true. Sometimes vocal and exuberant worship services sounded like people just making noise. His wife asked, after a particular Pentecostal prayer meeting, why the people were groaning during prayer, and he realized that what she heard in this instance was the hollow sound of a tradition that had lost its heart. He explained to her that in the early days of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit “moved,” people responded in various ways, they groaned, they wept, or they shouted for joy. He became suspicious that a subtle but dangerous shift had occurred in many of the Pentecostal settings with which he was familiar. Pentecostalism began as a cause-to-effect phenomenon and had become an effect-to-cause phenomenon. In the early days the Holy Spirit’s activity among people was the cause, while the weeping, groaning, and shouting were the effects of the Holy Spirit’s initiative. In that prayer meeting, however,

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 8-9.

his wife had witnessed people exercising themselves in expressions of weeping, groaning, and shouting in hopes that the Holy Spirit would consequently move. It seemed that seekers had become conjurors.

This shift was confirmed for the author in various other ways. He has attended worship services where he felt cajoled and sometimes shamed by leaders attempting to evoke spirited praise from the congregation. He has listened to preachers whose sermons were full Pentecostal sound yet devoid of substance. He has seen and experienced forceful laying on of hands in prayer that seemed bent on seeing the people prayed for fall over backwards.

This is not true of all Pentecostals, but there are enough who would resonate with this experience to merit addressing the subject. The author does doubt the sincerity of those he has described. He believes there are many sincere Pentecostals searching for the vitality of their tradition. This is true for the author; there is a Pentecostal vitality he cannot deny and would not want to be without. He believes, however, it is time to sift through the layers of tradition and tired rhetoric in search of authentic experience.

The second factor that influences the author's concern for revitalized Pentecostal congregations relates to the Assemblies of God congregation he pastors. The majority of the congregation has no roots in the Pentecostal tradition. Many are new converts who come from Catholic backgrounds and they do not feel bound to the Assemblies of God or its doctrinal distinctives. He wants introduce congregants to the riches of the Pentecostal tradition, and to lead them into the distinctive riches of Pentecostal faith and practice.

In Pentecostal churches the author has seen over the years, attempts to maintain or regain vitality have tended to move in one of a few directions. First, is a move toward methods, techniques, and spiritual fads including practices such as teaching people to speak in tongues, manic worship services, and emotionally coercive preaching. These approaches may appeal to some, but they leave many feeling cold.

A second direction congregations move toward in the pursuit of revitalization is an increased emphasis on Pentecostal doctrine. This can occur through a sermon series on the baptism of the Holy Spirit or a seminar on spiritual gifts. Teaching on these subjects is important in a Pentecostal church; however, the author has seen people make enthusiastic beginnings, only lose their momentum. After a sermon on the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they might respond to an altar call inviting them to be prayed for to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit or they may speak in tongues. There are many Pentecostals whose “baptism in the Holy Spirit” is a one-time experience. While laying claim to this Pentecostal benchmark, their encounter with the Holy Spirit has seemingly left no lasting impact. There is no discernable shift in their priorities, and none of the sense of urgency that marked the early Pentecostals.

These considerations fuel the author’s suspicion that Pentecostal vitality does not consist in simply believing Pentecostal doctrine or having Pentecostal experiences. There has to be another piece to the equation. Contemporary Pentecostals must be filled with the Spirit of God and be moved by the spirit of those who have gone before them. This paper asserts that Pentecostal vitality must take into account the urgencies and lived convictions of the early Pentecostals.

This project explores the early Pentecostals who participated in the Azusa Street revival and their immediate forerunners. The approach is inspired by Walter Brueggemann who writes, “The contemporary American church is so largely enculturated to the American ethos of consumerism that it has little power to believe or to act.”<sup>7</sup> He maintains that “our consciousness has been claimed by false fields of perception and idolatrous systems of language and rhetoric.”<sup>8</sup> This was caused by the church’s loss of identity, which occurred through the abandonment of the faith tradition. Brueggemann writes:

The church will not have power to act or believe until it recovers its tradition of faith and permits that tradition to be the primal way out of enculturation. This is not a cry for traditionalism but rather a judgment that the church has no business more pressing than the reappropriation of its memory in its full power and authenticity.<sup>9</sup>

Brueggemann hypothesizes that “the task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us.”<sup>10</sup> He calls for the Christian community to be a community “rooted in energizing memories and summoned by radical hopes.”<sup>11</sup>

Brueggemann’s views on the contemporary American church in general can be applied to the contemporary American Pentecostal church. The author of this paper

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<sup>7</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, 2d ed. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2001), 1.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 1.



believes, in order to maintain vitality (Brueggeman's "power to believe and to act"), Pentecostal churches must make a fresh appropriation of their Pentecostal memory. This is important to the author's own church context. Because most congregants have no rooting in the Pentecostal tradition, the Pentecostal identity struggles to progress much beyond a faltering grip on Pentecostal doctrine (specifically baptism in the Holy Spirit), occasional experiences of "Spirit baptism," and some exuberance in public worship. The author's greatest concern is that many of the riches of the Pentecostal tradition are in danger of being forgotten.

The author of this paper set out, in the spirit of Brueggemann, to listen afresh to the testimonies of Pentecostals associated with the Azusa Street revival for the purpose of re-appropriating the memories they contain. The intention was to identify a substantive core of their lived convictions; however, the author's focus narrowed. He read many testimonies that revealed passions and conviction about the power of God to change lives. There were ample testimonies to divine healing, baptisms in the Holy Spirit, and miraculous provisions. There were stories of people who went to great lengths to obey God, but one emphasis emerged that was foundational to the rest of their experience. At the Azusa Street revival there was a clear and defining emphasis on humility. The goal of this project was to identify a set of core convictions or urgencies, however the project focuses on humility.

Among the works that concern themselves with the propagation of the substance of Pentecostalism, five are noted in this paper. First, in *Paul, the Spirit and the People of*

*God*, Gordon Fee offers a fresh reading of the Apostle Paul, highlighting the central role of the Spirit in Paul's life, thought and ministry. He writes:

If the church is going to be effective in our postmodern world, we need to stop paying mere lip service to the Spirit and to recapture Paul's perspective: the Spirit as the *experienced, empowering* return of God's own *personal presence* in and among us, who enables us to live as a radically *eschatological* people in the present world while we await the consummation. All the rest, including fruit and gifts (that is, ethical life and charismatic utterances in worship), serve to that end.<sup>12</sup>

From this perspective, the presence of the Spirit as an experienced and living reality is crucial for vital faith.

A second book that touches the theme of Pentecostal revitalization is *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition* by Simon Chan. According to Chan, in order for Pentecostalism to remain vital from generation to generation, Pentecostals must cultivate an awareness of being part of the larger Christian tradition. While acknowledging that the decline of Pentecostal vitality has a number of causes, he sees the main cause as a failure of what he calls "traditioning." Chan notes that the experience of the early Pentecostals preceded their descriptions of their experience. They interpreted their experience through the lens of the experience itself. As subsequent generations arise, they have a diminished understanding of Pentecostalism to the extent they do not share the experiences of the previous generation. Referring to the impact on subsequent generations of Pentecostals Chan writes, "[W]hen the [Pentecostal] experience is inadequately conceptualized, what is communicated to the next generation is a constricted concept of the experience, and this concept will in turn evoke an equally

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<sup>12</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), xv.

narrow experience.”<sup>13</sup> Chan looks to the larger Christian tradition for conceptual tools to reinterpret Pentecostal experience more adequately.

In addition, Chan asserts that Pentecostals “need to develop an ecclesiology which makes effective traditioning possible.”<sup>14</sup> Churches need to be faithful and effective bearers of the Christian tradition. “The church needs to be seen not primarily as a functional entity for the sake of organizing our work more efficiently but as a supremely spiritual reality which, though existing in space and time, transcends space and time.”<sup>15</sup> Pentecostals are called away from a purely individualistic understanding of worship into a corporate understanding. This shift reestablishes the church as the locus for Pentecostal traditioning. Chan’s view of the church as the bearer of the Christian tradition resonates with Brueggemann’s concern that the church would faithfully re-appropriate its faith traditions.

Third, Steven J. Land offers a fresh interpretation and re-vision of the Pentecostal tradition in his book, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*.<sup>16</sup> Land’s thesis is that “the righteousness, holiness and power of God are correlated with distinctive apocalyptic affections which are the integrating core of Pentecostal spirituality.”<sup>17</sup> His

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<sup>13</sup> Chan, *Pentecostal Theology*, 10.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Steven J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993).

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 23.

work emphasizes “the integration of narrative beliefs and practices in the affections.”<sup>18</sup>

Land challenges Pentecostalism’s over-identification with the label “evangelical.” At the heart of the matter is the “outdated and fruitless antinomy of reason and ‘feelings.’”<sup>19</sup>

Land points the way to a Pentecostal spirituality that transcends the antinomy of reason and feelings by showing how Christian affections integrate and support Pentecostal beliefs and practices. Further, Land offers a re-visioning of Pentecostal spirituality.

Arguing that a passion for the kingdom of God is ultimately a passion for God, Land suggests a Trinitarian re-vision with the hope of provoking and encouraging “a more socially, missionally, ecumenically and theologically responsible Pentecostalism.”<sup>20</sup>

Fourth, in *Back to the Altar* Trask and Womack address the need for revitalization by emphasizing the need for spiritual awakening. Writing in the context of the Assemblies of God, they state, “Our purpose is not to call for a return to the early twentieth century but to point our Fellowship to the same powerful source from which sprang the revival of our forefathers—the original Christianity of the New Testament church.”<sup>21</sup> They see a need for “the inspiration of a fresh encounter with the Spirit of God.”<sup>22</sup> Their book constitutes a call to “serious prayer and fasting.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>21</sup> Trask and Womack, *Back to the Altar*, 5.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 17.

Fifth, Grant Wacker provides rich insights into early Pentecostal life and experience in his book *Heaven Below*. The primary goal of this book is “to register the sounds of the Pentecostal past as fully as possible in a single volume.”<sup>24</sup> Wacker provides “a close description of their everyday lives, and especially the religious aspects of their everyday lives.”<sup>25</sup> This book is peerless in giving the reader a feel for the texture of lived Pentecostalism in the opening decades of the twentieth century.

All of these authors have made valuable contributions to the multi-dimensional subject of the spiritual revitalization of Pentecostal churches, but none of them focuses specifically on the subject of humility. This dissertation argues that humility is a core component in Pentecostal vitality.

Chapter 1 looks at the immediate antecedents to Pentecostalism. The nineteenth century saw the rise of restorationist movements that exerted a shaping influence on Pentecostalism. By restorationist, this paper refers to any “attempt to recapture the presumed vitality, message, and form of the Apostolic Church.”<sup>26</sup> These attempts include the Wesleyan Holiness movement, the Higher Life movement, and the Keswick movement. These were tributaries that contributed to the rise of the Pentecostal movement. Key Pentecostal convictions were inherited from these traditions, and this chapter provides a brief overview of these tributary movements and looks at why these

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<sup>24</sup> Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 9.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Edith L. Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God: A Chapter in the Story of American Pentecostalism*, vol. 1 (Springfield, MO: Gospel, 1989), 18. This usage differentiates this term from its use to describe the Stone-Campbell Restorationist Movement.

groups thought a “higher” Christian life was necessary, and what they meant by a “higher life.”

Having surveyed these movements, Chapter 2 closely analyzes the heart passions found in them. Their urgencies were centered around four doctrines: salvation, baptism in the Holy Spirit, divine healing, and the second coming of Jesus. These four doctrines guide this paper’s treatment of their passions and urgencies. In the process, humility emerges in the form of a radical God-dependency.

Chapter 3 recounts the story of how the Pentecostal movement began and emphasizes two early Pentecostal figures, Charles Parham and William J. Seymour. This chapter will then focus on the Azusa Street Apostolic Mission, widely considered to be the birthplace of the modern Pentecostal movement.

Chapter 4 explores the hearts of early Pentecostals and narrows the paper’s focus to the subject of humility. This chapter demonstrates how humility factored into the thinking of the participants in the Azusa Street revival. The chapter shows the centrality of humility in the theological interpretation of the facilities in which the participants met. Then it examines the ways in which humility factored into various facets of their revival experience.

Chapter 5 reflects on implications of this paper’s findings and suggests applications for Pentecostal pastors and their congregations. The goal is to make a contribution that could be helpful for some pastors and congregations who are seeking revitalization in their Pentecostal faith and experience. Specifically, the author of this

paper hopes his work will provide a basis for teaching his own congregation about the riches of Pentecostal heritage.

## CHAPTER 1

### ANTECEDENTS TO PENTECOSTALISM

This chapter establishes a framework for understanding the spiritual climate that contributed to the emergence of the Pentecostal movement in the United States in the early twentieth century. Specifically, this chapter examines nineteenth-century restorationism's contribution to the Pentecostal ethos. After defining the use of the word "restorationism," this chapter describes the concern that existed about the decline of spiritual vitality among believers and considers factors that led to the spiritual decline that alarmed restorationists. Next, this chapter highlights key dynamics of restorationism that became programmatic for early Pentecostals. Last, this chapter introduces some of the prominent figures associated with restorationism within the context of their theological perspectives. Theologically, restorationism is concerned not only with the Holy Spirit, but with eschatology and divine healing. Chapter 2 examines these subjects more fully and illuminates these doctrines by examining primary sources to show how restorationist convictions energized the movement.

#### **Restorationism Defined**

Pentecostalism emerged from a nineteenth-century Protestant restorationist context. Edith Blumhofer defines restorationism as "the attempt to recapture the



presumed vitality, message, and form of the Apostolic Church.”<sup>1</sup> Nineteenth-century restorationists sought Christian vitality amid what they perceived to be a decaying church.

The term restorationism can refer to a nineteenth-century movement associated with Barton W. Stone and Alexander Campbell. This movement gave rise to the present-day Disciples of Christ, Christian Church, and Churches of Christ.<sup>2</sup> This paper does not use the term this specifically. While the movement started by Stone and Campbell represents the largest of the restorationist groups, restorationism is a broader movement. Blumhofer notes, “Efforts to restore New Testament practices—or at least the expectation that God would sovereignly restore them—were not confined to any specific denomination.”<sup>3</sup> Indeed, “The emergence of Pentecostalism was part of an ongoing struggle to understand and make vital for our own time the meaning of the New Testament.”<sup>4</sup> This paper uses restorationism in this broader sense to describe the impulses of those who longed to recapture what they presumed to be the apostolic church’s vitality, message, and form.

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<sup>1</sup> Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God*, 18.

<sup>2</sup> Alistair Mason, “Restorationism,” in *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*, ed. Adrian Hastings, Alistair Mason, and Hugh Pyper (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 615.

<sup>3</sup> Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God*, 21.

<sup>4</sup> Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987), 35.

### Concern Over Spiritual Decline

Concerns over the spiritual decay of the church began roughly in the 1830s.

“Christians in several denominations sounded an alarm about the domestication of evangelicalism. [Evangelicals] showed troubling signs of selling out to secular moral values.”<sup>5</sup> Ministers such as Henry C. Fish and A. J. Gordon voiced concerns over spiritual decay in the church. In 1855, Fish published a work entitled *Primitive Piety Revived*. Fish saw in the church many things over which to rejoice. For instance, he saw that the church’s “numerous membership embraces a fair proportion of the intelligence, and wealth, and influence of the land.”<sup>6</sup> Further, he found encouragement in the goodwill he saw between different religious denominations and in the advances he saw in the areas of Christian benevolence and missions work. Yet, Fish’s joy was tempered by deep concerns: “Notwithstanding these encouraging considerations, it must be acknowledged that there is much in the present condition of the Christian Church to chasten our rejoicings, awaken our concern, and impel us to earnest prayer and deep contrition.”<sup>7</sup> Fish sided with those who found deep concern for the type of piety that was prevalent and cites an unknown author as a fair representation of this concern:

As compared with the work now demanded by the exigencies of Christ’s kingdom, the present is an age of worldliness, of lukewarmness, and self-indulgence. The merest modicum, as a general thing, is given to the work of Christ, while multitudes go for fashion, extravagance, and luxury. Even the little

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<sup>5</sup> Douglas A. Sweeney, *The American Evangelical Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 135.

<sup>6</sup> Henry C. Fish, *Primitive Piety Revived* (1855; repr. Harrison, VA: Sprinkle, 1987), 4.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

we do for foreign missions seems in danger of bribing our consciences into the neglect of the perishing around us. The broad way is still the thronged way.<sup>8</sup>

Fish identified six deficiencies found in the church: lack of simplicity of purpose, lack of consecration to God, lack of self-denial for Christ, lack of scriptural faith, lack of earnestness, and lack of individualism (such as one's individual responsibility to God). The remedy for these deficiencies is "a general and powerful revival of religion in the churches."<sup>9</sup>

Gordon, the pastor of Boston's Clarendon Street Baptist Church, voiced similar concerns four decades later. He warned against "church amusements," which he considered to be "parasites hiding under a religious exterior, while they eat out the life of Christianity."<sup>10</sup> A sampling of this "unseemly catalogue" of amusements includes:

Performers brought from the opera or from the theatre on Sunday to regale the ears of the church with some flighty song of artistic musical display; a star violinist dressed in the style of his profession, preparing the way for the sermon by a brilliant and fantastic solo; a curtain drawn across the pulpit platform on a week-night, footlights and scenery brought from the play-house, and a drama enacted by the young people of the church, ending with a dance by the gayly dressed children; a comic reader filling the pulpit on Monday evening, delivering a caricature sermon amid the convulsive laughter and hand-clapping of the Christians present.<sup>11</sup>

He concludes:

These are but a few acts in the comedy which the god of this world is performing weekly in church assemblies. Taken with the dramatic readings, literary entertainments, amateur theatrical, fairs, frolics, festivals, and lotteries, the story

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., xii.

<sup>10</sup> A. J. Gordon, *How Christ Came to Church* (Philadelphia: American Baptist, 1895), 53.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 52-53.

is enough to make the angels of the churches blush, and to give fresh occasion for an apostle's tears while he utters the solemn verdict: 'for many walk of whom I have told you often and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things.'<sup>12</sup>

Gordon sounds a similar note as Henry Fish's call for revival: "The Holy Ghost, the present Christ, has been given to be the administrator of the church; and that in these days of endless organizations and multiplied secular machinery, he will surprise us by showing what he will do if we will give him unhindered liberty of action in his own house."<sup>13</sup>

Fish and Gordon expressed concern over the decline of the church as a whole, but church decline was symptomatic of waning spiritual vitality in individual Christians. In the opening pages of his book *The Higher Christian Life* William Boardman articulates the need for the restoration of vitality among Christians:

Some disciples of Christ live, life-long, under condemnation, and know no better. They are always doubting, and think they must always doubt. And very many live a life of ups and downs, and suppose *that* to be the best God has in store for them while in the body. Occasionally they gain some lookout in the mount, and then, through the swaying branches of the trees of life moved by the breath of heaven, they catch glimpses of the river of the waters of life, gleaming in the rays of the Sun of Righteousness, and are filled with gladness. But then again, soon they find themselves in the low grounds of unbelief, wrapped up in fogs of doubt, and chilled, and poisoned by the mist and malaria of worldly cares and worldly company.<sup>14</sup>

Hannah Whitall Smith sounds a similar note in *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*. She relates a remark made to her by one whom she describes as a "keen observer"

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>14</sup> William Boardman, *The Higher Christian Life* (Boston: Henry Hoyt, 1859), 15-16.

who said, “You Christians seem to have a religion that makes you miserable. You are like a man with a headache. He does not want to get rid of his head, but it hurts him to keep it. You cannot expect outsiders to seek very earnestly for anything so uncomfortable.”<sup>15</sup>

Smith follows by addressing Christians whose faith lacks practical vitality:

Your victories have been few and fleeting, your defeats many and disastrous. . . . You have had perhaps a clear understanding of doctrinal truths, but you have not come into possession of their life and power. . . . Christ is believed in, talked about, and served, but He is not known as the soul’s actual and very life, abiding there forever, and revealing Himself there continually in His beauty. You have carefully studied the Holy Scriptures, and have gathered much precious truth there, from which you have trusted would feed and nourish your spiritual life, but in spite of it all, your souls are starving and dying within you . . . and you have been forced to settle down to the conviction, that the best you can expect from your religion is a life of alternate failure and victory, one hour sinning, and the next repenting, and then beginning again, only to fail again, and again to repent.<sup>16</sup>

The “higher Christian life” advocated by Boardman, Smith, and others was not intended to be an expression of spiritual elitism. There was not one faith for the masses and a higher faith for the few, but only one Christian faith. The word “higher” spoke to the low spiritual ebb they perceived around them. In 1883, in his book about, “The enduement of the Spirit for power, for service, for testimony, for success”<sup>17</sup> entitled *The Twofold Life* Gordon writes, “There are so many instances of arrested development in the church; believers who have settled into a condition of confirmed infancy, and whose

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<sup>15</sup> Hannah Whitall Smith, *The Christian’s Secret of a Happy Life* (1883; repr., Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1952), 15.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 16-17.

<sup>17</sup> A. J. Gordon, *The Twofold Life* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1883), 14.

testimony always begins back with conversion, and hovers around that event, like the talk of children who are perpetually telling how old they are.”<sup>18</sup>

William Boardman understood the cause of this arrested development to be the absence of whole-hearted commitment on the part of many believers. He writes, “Many are stopped at the outset, by reluctance to give the world entirely up, and be wholly conformed to the will of Christ. A moderate, reasonable, half and half-life in the service of the Master they are willing to live. But to be wholly consecrated to God is more than they can consent to.”<sup>19</sup> A. W. Tozer, writing in the twentieth century, captured the heart-cry of nineteenth-century restorationism in his assertion that “the average Christian life is tragically shallow.”<sup>20</sup>

The advocates for the higher Christian life did not want to create a band of spiritually elite Christians, but to see all believers restored to a vibrant Christian life based on a vital relationship with Jesus. William Boardman chastised those who would settle for less than a vibrant, victorious Christian life:

God is not well pleased with this shrinking plea of the over modest disciple who says, “Not for me.” . . . It is not modesty but unbelief which puts in this shrinking plea. . . . Christ is no more freely offered in the faith of his atonement, than in the assurance of his personal presence and sanctifying power! He has not given himself to us in half of his offices freely, then to withhold himself from us in the other half. If we are content to take him as a half-way Saviour—a deliverer from condemnation, merely, but refuse to look to him as a present Saviour from sin, it is our own fault. He is a full Saviour. And to all who trust him he gives full salvation. To all and to each.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 10-11.

<sup>19</sup> Boardman, *The Higher Christian Life*, 149-150.

<sup>20</sup> A. W. Tozer, *Keys to the Deeper Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), 32.

<sup>21</sup> Boardman, *The Higher Christian Life*, 75-76.

Smith contended that “the experience sometimes called the Higher Christian Life . . . is the only true Christian life.”<sup>22</sup>

### **Causes of Spiritual Decline**

Several factors contributed to the climate out of which restorationism arose. One factor is the ongoing need for renewal in the church. This need arises from the perennial inward and personal effect of sin in the lives of Christians. Richard Lovelace observes, “There is . . . gravity inherent in human sin, a kind of entropy in human nature which guarantees that the vigor of spiritual life will constantly run down unless it is renewed through the channel of dependent prayer.”<sup>23</sup> This dynamic faces the church in every generation.

Sydney Ahlstrom notes three social factors that resulted in the decline of evangelicalism in *A Religious History of the American People*.<sup>24</sup> First, there was a dramatic rise in urbanization following the Civil War and urbanization brought social and economic upheaval. During the generation following the Civil War, the United States transitioned from being a predominantly agricultural nation to being an industrial nation. The corresponding rise of urbanization resulted in anonymity of urban living, increased economic pressure and mounting social problems.<sup>25</sup> In addition, urban life brought

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<sup>22</sup> Smith, *The Christian's Secret*, 37.

<sup>23</sup> Richard F. Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1979), 66.

<sup>24</sup> Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972), 733-74.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 735-738.

exposure to a diversity of religious and ethnic groups largely unknown in the pre-urban village and town contexts. Taken together, these factors undermined the kind of social consensus that Protestantism enjoyed in the pre-industrial United States.<sup>26</sup>

Second, Ahlstrom notes that the arrival of immigrants in unprecedented numbers threatened the old Protestant establishment.<sup>27</sup> Three dynamics related to immigration played into the diminishment of Protestant influence. First, many of the immigrants were Roman Catholic, Jewish, Eastern Orthodox, or Lutheran. Second, they largely lived together in tightly congested urban neighborhoods. This made them resistant to outside cultural, ethnic, or religious influences. Third, the Protestant churches were losing contact with the urban population. As Protestantism became increasingly upwardly mobile, congregations increasingly moved out of urban contexts. At the same time, the orientation of these congregations became increasingly irrelevant to the urban population.

Ahlstrom writes:

In a church already moving up the social scale, the sermons tended toward greater intellectual sophistication, the music had a similarly restricted appeal, and parish programs increasingly answered to middle- and upper-class needs. In such congregations, proper sewing-circle conversation and the niceties of holding a teacup were effective bars to evangelistic outreach.<sup>28</sup>

Ahlstrom notes how modern thought contributed to the decline of evangelicalism because it posed a challenge to the traditional understanding of the nature and reliability of the Bible. German higher criticism, for example, called into question the historicity of

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 737-38.



many biblical accounts and Darwin's theory of evolution stood in stark contrast to the Genesis creation accounts. Taken together, these factors resulted in a decline in evangelicalism that gave rise to a yearning among some for the restoration of apostolic faith.<sup>29</sup>

### **Dynamics of Restorationism**

The impulse toward the restoration of the church gave rise to dynamics that ultimately proved to be programmatic for Pentecostalism. Edith Blumhofer identifies four dynamics common among restorationists.<sup>30</sup> First, restorationism sounded a call to Christian perfection and religious reform. This call contradicted late nineteenth-century evolutionary optimism. Eschewing faith in progress and development, restorationists called for a return to the norms of an earlier era. They believed the church had become tainted by the accumulation of tradition and sought to purify the church by measuring its practices and beliefs against the standard of the New Testament.<sup>31</sup>

Second, restorationists tended to idealize the early church. Restorationists promoted a sanitized vision of the experience of the early church. They ignored the turmoil and heterodoxy that characterized Christian beginnings, and focused on the unity

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 766-772.

<sup>30</sup> Edith L. Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith: The Assemblies of God, Pentecostalism, and American Culture* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 13-14.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 13.

of the early church. This perspective fueled their hopes of recovering the “pure” gospel, which would ultimately purify and unite true Christians.<sup>32</sup>

Third, the restorationists grappled with eschatological issues. There were two fundamental strands of eschatological thought. Some saw America as destined to play a role in the millennium. Others took an apocalyptic view, which understood the restoration of the church to be an integral part of end-times Christianity. Regardless of the particular perspective, eschatology figured significantly into the restorationist outlook.<sup>33</sup>

Fourth, restorationist expectations nurtured anti-denominational sentiments. Restorationists felt that God had long since abandoned organized religion; therefore, they were impatient with what they considered to be the trappings of organized religion, such as tradition and creeds. Further, restorationists tended to find submission to church authority intolerable. In fact, the popular holiness preacher John H. Brooks urged “come-outism” as a necessity. Blumhofer concludes, “This persuasion molded the subculture in which Pentecostal views flourished: early Pentecostals were often radical evangelicals whose preferences had marginalized them from the mainstream before they embraced Pentecostalism.”<sup>34</sup> The net effect of the dynamics of restorationism was to offer its adherents a sense of certainty and divine immediacy, along with a new way of perceiving reality.

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 14.

### Prominent Figures in Restorationism

John Wesley founded Methodism and was “the spiritual and intellectual father of the modern holiness and Pentecostal movements.”<sup>35</sup> Early Methodism reacted against ecclesiological institutionalism and sounded a note that would be heard again among holiness advocates and Pentecostals. Vinson Synan notes:

Eighteenth-century Methodism was essentially a reaction against the prevailing creedal rigidity, liturgical strictness, and “ironclad institutionalism” that had largely depersonalized religion and rendered it incapable of serving the needs of individuals. Methodist perfectionism in America was “a swing toward warmth, feeling, experience, and morality” and away from the mechanical, permissive, de-ethicalized, and formal worship of the times.<sup>36</sup>

The broad-based Holiness movement endeavored to preserve and propagate John Wesley’s teaching on Christian perfection. In a radical departure from Reformed and Puritan belief, Wesley advocated a “second blessing,” which was a crisis experience he called “entire sanctification.” He also described the experience as “perfect love” or “Christian perfection.”<sup>37</sup>

For Wesley, the process of salvation involves two separate experiences, or works of grace. The first is conversion, or justification, in which the believer is freed from the penalty for sins committed. The second work of grace is sanctification, or Christian

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<sup>35</sup> Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 1.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>37</sup> Vinson Synan, “Pentecostal Roots,” in *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal, 1901-2001*, ed. Vinson Synan (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 15.

perfection. For Wesley, sanctification is both process and crisis. Within the process of sanctification, there is a crisis moment of entire sanctification. Wesley states:

By justification we are saved from the guilt of sin, and restored to the favour of God; by sanctification we are saved from the power and root of sin, and restored to the image of God. All experience, as well as Scripture, show this salvation to be both instantaneous and gradual. It begins in the moment we are justified in the holy, humble, gentle, patient love of God on man. It gradually increases from that moment, as a “grain of mustard-seed, which, at first, is the least of all seeds,” but afterwards puts forth large branches, and becomes a great tree; till, in another instant, the heart is cleansed from all sin, and filled with pure love to God and man. But even that love increases more and more, till we “grow up in all things into Him that is our Head,” till we attain “the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”<sup>38</sup>

This “second blessing” crisis experience frees the believer from the power of sin.

Synan summarizes:

In the first experience the penitent was forgiven for actual sins of commission, becoming a Christian but retaining a “residue of sin within.” This remaining “inbred sin” was the result of Adam’s fall had to be dealt with by a “second blessing, properly so-called.” This experience purified the believer of inward sin and gave a person “perfect love” toward God and humanity.<sup>39</sup>

John Wesley’s successor, John Fletcher, understood the crisis moment of entire sanctification as “a baptism in the Holy Spirit.” Regarding Christian perfection Fletcher writes:

You will find my view of this matter in Mr. Wesley’s sermons on Christian Perfection and on Scriptural Christianity; with this difference, that I would distinguish more exactly between the believer baptized with the Pentecostal

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<sup>38</sup> John Wesley, “Sermon 85: On Working Out Our Own Salvation,” part 2, section 1, (London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1872), 6:509; repr. *The Works of John Wesley*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1986).

<sup>39</sup> Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 6.

power of the Holy Ghost, and the believer who, like the Apostles after our Lord's ascension, is not yet filled with that power.<sup>40</sup>

In line with Fletcher, the Wesleyans who became part of the holiness movement in the nineteenth century often called this second blessing a “baptism in the Holy Spirit.”<sup>41</sup> The possibility of a second blessing, along with the language of baptism in the Holy Spirit, carried forward into Pentecostalism. According to Robert Mapes Anderson, “The outstanding characteristics of the Holiness movement—literal-minded Biblicism, emotional fervor, puritanical mores, enmity toward ecclesiasticism, and, above all, belief in a ‘Second Blessing’ in Christian experience—were inherited and perpetuated by Pentecostals.”<sup>42</sup>

Dayton identified a four-fold pattern of theological themes that Pentecostalism inherited from the Holiness movement.<sup>43</sup> These themes are salvation, healing, baptism in the Holy Spirit, and the second coming of Jesus. These four themes express the logic of Pentecostal theology, and “are well-nigh universal within the movement, appearing . . . in all branches and varieties of Pentecostalism.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> John Fletcher to Mary Bosanquet, March 7, 1778, in Luke Tyerman, *Wesley's Designated Successor* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1882), 411, quoted in Dayton, *Theological Roots*, 50.

<sup>41</sup> Synan, “Pentecostal Roots,” 15.

<sup>42</sup> Robert M. Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1979), 28.

<sup>43</sup> Dayton, *Theological Roots*, 21.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 21f. There was a five-fold pattern that preceded the four-fold pattern. The additional theological emphasis results from a two-fold understanding of salvation in the Holiness tradition. Dayton comments, “Though the five-fold pattern was historically prior and thus has certain claims for our attention, the four-fold pattern expresses more clearly and cleanly the logic of Pentecostal theology. It is, moreover, contained within the more complex pattern and thus has a certain claim to be at least logically, if not historically, prior to the five-fold pattern.”

Early Methodist meetings were characterized by Pentecostal-like experiences such as weeping, shouting, and groaning. One observer wrote, “Some would be seized with a trembling, and in a few moments drop on the floor as if they were dead.”<sup>45</sup> Synan describes the Cane Ridge camp meeting in Kentucky in 1801 as possibly, “the most famous outbreak of enthusiastic, Pentecostal-like religion in American history.”<sup>46</sup> People experienced falling, jerking, barking like dogs, trances, holy laughter, and wild dancing.<sup>47</sup>

By the mid-nineteenth century, Methodism had exerted broad influence on American Christianity. By the 1830s there was “a rising tide of emphasis on Christian perfection that produced the ‘Holiness crusade.’”<sup>48</sup> Timothy Merritt, a prominent minister in Boston, emphasized Christian perfection. In 1825 he wrote *The Christian’s Manual: A Treatise on Christian Perfection, with Directions for Obtaining That State*.<sup>49</sup> In 1839 he founded the *Guide to Christian Perfection*, which became the most influential Holiness periodical of that era.

Perhaps the most prominent figure in the Holiness Revival was a Methodist layperson named Phoebe Palmer. In 1835 Palmer began the Tuesday Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness, which met in her home. Synan notes:

As the “Tuesday Meetings” grew in popularity, hundreds of preachers and laymen from various denominations flocked to her home to hear of the “shorter way” of

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<sup>45</sup> Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 9.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>48</sup> Dayton, *Theological Roots*, 65.

<sup>49</sup> Timothy Merritt, *The Christian’s Manual; A Treatise on Christian Perfection, with Directions for Obtaining That State* (New York: N. Bangs and J. Emory for the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1825).

achieving the perfection and ecstasy that early Christian saints had taken entire lifetimes to acquire. But placing “all on the altar,” she taught, one could be instantly sanctified through the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The seekers were encouraged to testify to receiving the blessing “by faith” even if they failed to experience any emotional feelings at the moment.<sup>50</sup>

Palmer gained international recognition through her publications authoring several books including, *The Way of Holiness*<sup>51</sup> and *The Promise of the Father*.<sup>52</sup> In addition, she edited and published *The Guide to Holiness*, the magazine Timothy Merritt founded under the name *Guide to Christian Perfection*, for ten years. Palmer traveled extensively in the United States, Canada, and Great Britain and “became one of the most widely recognized revivalists in the world.”<sup>53</sup>

During this same time, those involved in Reformed revivalism began to incorporate Wesleyan influences in their teaching. Historian Edwin Woodruff Tait reports that in 1836, Oberlin College’s President, Asa Mahan, and the school’s professor of theology, Charles Finney, both experienced a sanctifying second blessing, which they described as “baptisms with the Holy Ghost.”<sup>54</sup> From this emerged an Oberlin perfectionism that had been strongly influenced by the Wesleyan view of sanctification.

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<sup>50</sup> Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 17-18.

<sup>51</sup> Phoebe Palmer, *The Way of Holiness with Notes by the Way* (New York: Palmer and Hughes, n.d.).

<sup>52</sup> Phoebe Palmer, *The Promise of the Father, or, a Neglected Specialty of the Last Days* (Boston: H. V. Degen, 1859).

<sup>53</sup> H. E. Raser, “Palmer, Phoebe Worrall,” in *Biographical Dictionary of Evangelicals*, ed. Timothy Larson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 501.

<sup>54</sup> Edwin Woodruff Tait, “The Cleansing Wave,” *Christian History and Biography*, no. 82 (Spring 2004): 22.

Asa Mahan expounded the Oberlin perspective in his book *The Scripture Doctrine of Christian Perfection*.<sup>55</sup>

The revival of 1857-58 spread the ideals of the Holiness teaching far and wide. In 1858, during the height of the revival, William E. Boardman published *The Higher Christian Life*. This book, an immediate bestseller, provided a new terminology that allowed for the acceptance of its message across denominational lines.

The years following the Civil War were characterized by spiritual decline and moral depression in America. A concern arose among Methodists that the doctrine of sanctification was waning within Methodism. One answer to that concern was, “a camp meeting, the special object of which should be the promotion of the work of entire sanctification.”<sup>56</sup> The call was for Christians of various denominations to come “and make common supplication for the descent of the Spirit upon ourselves, the church, the nation, and the world.”<sup>57</sup> On June 17, 1867, a holiness camp meeting was held in Vineland, New Jersey. Synan comments:

Those who attended felt unanimously that this meeting was destined to “exert an influence over all Christendom” as well as “to initiate a new era in Methodism.” Little did these men realize that this meeting would eventually result in the formation of over a hundred denominations around the world and indirectly bring to birth a “Third Force” in Christendom, the Pentecostal movement.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Asa Mahan, *The Scripture Doctrine of Christian Perfection* (Boston: D. S. King, 1839).

<sup>56</sup> Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 25.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 26.



The Vineland camp meeting spawned a camp meeting movement that spanned the next several years, and led to the formation of the National Holiness Association. The movement was aided by a flourishing of holiness publications; however, as the Holiness movement became more radical, it came to be rejected within the ranks of Methodism.<sup>59</sup> Radical Wesleyans, in a movement of “come-outism” created numerous Holiness churches and denominations, including The Church of God (Anderson, Indiana), The Church of the Nazarene, and The Pilgrim Holiness Church. Some of the Holiness denominations became Pentecostal, including The Pentecostal Holiness Church under the leadership of A. B. Crumpler; The Church of God in Christ, led by C. H. Mason and C. P. Jones; and The Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee), led by A. J. Tomlinson.<sup>60</sup>

John Fletcher, Asa Mahan, and Charles Finney, were inclined to identify the Wesleyan second blessing as a baptism in the Holy Spirit. The “shift” to Pentecostal vocabulary and themes can be heard in many voices in the nineteenth century.<sup>61</sup> The theme of Pentecostal power mingled with the emphasis on holiness to varying degrees.

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 34-40.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 48-49, 62-63, 70-77.

<sup>61</sup> Dayton, *Theological Roots*, 93. See: Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Abingdon, 1957). While other authors claim that the nineteenth century is the birthplace of Pentecostal language, Laurence Wood has shown that Pentecostal language and themes were prevalent among Wesley and his close associates. See Laurence W. Wood, *The Meaning of Pentecost in Early Methodism* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2002). Synan highlights the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church as an important link to Pentecostalism. He says, “By teaching that the baptism of the Holy Ghost was an experience separate from and subsequent to sanctification, it laid the basic doctrinal premise of the later movement.” Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Traditions*, 59.

For Phoebe Palmer, “holiness is power.”<sup>62</sup> Charles White says of Palmer, “She believed that just as the Holy Spirit had energized the disciples after the day of Pentecost, so every Christian who receives the Spirit in entire sanctification will similarly be empowered.”<sup>63</sup> More typical than Palmer’s attempt to equate holiness and power was the view that Pentecost brought both holiness and power. In his pamphlet, *The Baptism with the Holy Ghost*, H. C. Morrison writes, “the baptism with the Holy Ghost purifies believers’ hearts and empowers them for service.”<sup>64</sup>

Another approach to balancing the themes of holiness and power was the “three blessings” teaching. This teaching divides the second work of grace into two separate works. This development was occasioned by observation and experience. First, many who claimed to be entirely sanctified seemed to lack the commensurate spiritual power. Second, some of those who had been sanctified subsequently experienced a baptism in the Holy Spirit. The biblical precedent was found in the model of Jesus, who Asbury Lowery described as “holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners and yet He sought and received the baptism of the Spirit.”<sup>65</sup> Others saw precedent in the words of John the Baptist, who said that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. Edwin

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<sup>62</sup> Palmer, *The Promise*, 206, quoted in Dayton, *Theological Roots*, 94.

<sup>63</sup> Charles White, “Holiness Fire-Starter,” *Christian History and Biography*, 82 (Spring 2004): 21.

<sup>64</sup> H. C. Morrison, *The Baptism with the Holy Ghost* (Louisville, KY: Pentecostal Herald Press, 1900), 31, quoted in Dayton, *Theological Roots*, 94.

<sup>65</sup> Asbury Lowrey, “Is the Baptism of the Holy Ghost a Thirst Blessing?” *Divine Life*, September 1879, 47, quoted in Dayton, *Theological Roots*, 96.

Pope asserted that “the baptism of fire is a different baptism from that with the Holy Ghost, a baptism for which the baptism with the Holy Ghost is preparatory.”<sup>66</sup>

Among those with more Reformed sympathies, including the Oberlin Perfectionists Asa Mahan and Charles Finney, the Wesleyan holiness themes were increasingly overshadowed by an emphasis on the Holy Spirit’s empowering for service. In *The Baptism of the Holy Ghost*, Mahan cites “power” as one of the leading characteristics of Spirit-baptism.<sup>67</sup> While not ignoring the Spirit’s power in sanctifying, Mahan remarks, “Power with God and power with men are the invariable results of this anointing.”<sup>68</sup> He writes of his friend Charles Finney, “The reason, also, why he is bringing forth such wondrous ‘fruit in his old age,’ is, that while his whole ministry has been under ‘the power of the Spirit,’ his former baptisms have been renewed with increasing power and frequency during a few years past.”<sup>69</sup>

Besides those in the holiness movement, other evangelical Christians had intense interest in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. These individuals had ties to the Congregationalists, Baptists, and Presbyterians. They denied the basic Wesleyan premise

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<sup>66</sup> Edwin Pope, “‘With Fire’ As Well As ‘With the Holy Ghost,’” *Divine Life*, October 1885, 95, quoted in Dayton, *Theological Roots*, 97.

<sup>67</sup> Asa Mahan, *The Baptism of the Holy Ghost* (New York: W. C. Palmer, 1870), 52. The other characteristic is “permanence,” by which he seems to mean something like stability and fortitude in Christian commitment and character.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 88. For Finney’s own attestation of Mahan’s emphasis on empowerment see his articles collected in Charles Finney, *Power from on High* (Fort Washington, PA: Christian Literature Crusade, 1996). See also Finney’s four chapters appended to the 1880 edition of Mahan’s book, reprinted as Asa Mahan, *The Baptism of the Holy Spirit/God’s Provision of Power* (1880; repr., Clinton, NY: Williams, 2002).

of the necessity of two works of grace, but clearly emphasized a baptism in the Holy Spirit that brings spiritual power. Among these were Dwight Moody, A. J. Gordon, and Reuben A. Torrey.

Reuben Torrey's 1895 book *The Baptism With The Holy Spirit* became foundational to the Pentecostal understanding of baptism with the Holy Spirit. Torrey rejected the doctrine of two works of grace. Instead of a second, crisis work of sanctification, he advocated a progressive growth in sanctification. Although he believed that Christians only experienced one work of grace, he upheld that conviction that "the baptism with the Holy Spirit is an absolutely necessary preparation for effective service for Christ along every line of service."<sup>70</sup> Torrey insisted that it was wrong to attempt ministry until one had been baptized in the Holy Spirit:

We may have a very clear call to service; it may be as clear as the apostles had—but the charge is laid upon us, as upon them, that before we begin that service we must "tarry until ye be clothed with power from on high." This enduement with power is through the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

There are certainly few greater mistakes being made today than that of setting men to teach Sunday school classes, do personal work, and even preach the gospel, simply because they have been converted and have received a certain amount of education—perhaps including a college and seminary course—but without having been as yet baptized with the Holy Spirit. Any man who is in Christian work who has not received the baptism with the Holy Spirit ought to stop his work right where he is and not go on with it until he has been "clothed with power from on high."<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> R. A. Torrey, *The Baptism with the Holy Spirit* (1895; repr., Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1972), 30.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 30-31.

There were others who, in their interest in holiness and spiritual power, held a mediating position between the Wesleyans and non-Wesleyans. While maintaining a focus on Christ and the Holy Spirit, they were less concerned with theology than with experience. Dissatisfied with the quality of Christianity they saw lived out around them, they advocated a higher Christian life.<sup>72</sup>

A key figure was William Boardman, who advocated for an intense spirituality that he considered most Christians to lack.<sup>73</sup> In the 1870s Boardman joined forces with Robert Pearsall Smith and Hannah Whitall Smith. Together, their ministries formed the foundation of the British Keswick movement through which participants shared a concern for Christians to live an overcoming life. Other Keswick participants included A. T. Pierson, F. B. Meyer, G. Campbell Morgan, J. Hudson Taylor, Horatio Bonar, and Andrew Murray. A. T. Pierson provided a summary of the Keswick teaching. He identified seven core convictions in this diverse movement:

(1) Immediate abandonment of known sin; (2) surrender of the will to Jesus as Master and Lord; (3) appropriation by faith of God's promise and power for holy living; (4) voluntary renunciation and mortification of the self-life; (5) gracious renewal, or transformation, of the inmost temper and disposition; (6) separation unto God for sanctification, consecration, and service; and (7) enduement with power and infilling with the Holy Spirit, the believer claiming his share in the Pentecostal gift.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God*, 57.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>74</sup> A. T. Pierson, *The Keswick Convention* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1900) A. T. Pierson, *Forward Movements of the Last Half Century* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1900), 32-33, quoted in Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God*, 59-60. In her footnote to this Pierson quote Blumhofer notes, "Some Keswick participants resented Pierson's effort to define their message; they dismissed it as a typically American attempt to codify something that could never be captured in words."

Dwight Moody introduced the Keswick influence into the United States through his Northfield Conferences. Dayton writes, “This coalescing of British Keswick and American revivalism produced an important constellation of figures.”<sup>75</sup> He notes especially A. B. Simpson, A. J. Gordon, Reuben Torrey, and Andrew Murray.

Simpson advocated a strongly Christocentric, four-fold gospel,<sup>76</sup> which focused on Christ as Savior, Healer, Sanctifier, and Coming King. These four teachings became foundational doctrines of the Christian and Missionary Alliance founded by Simpson, and the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel founded by Aimee Semple McPherson. These four teachings also comprise the four “cardinal doctrines” of the Assemblies of God.<sup>77</sup>

According to Dayton, “By the mid-1890s almost every branch of the Holiness and ‘higher life’ movements of the nineteenth century, as well as the revivalism of the period in general, was teaching a variation of some sort or another on the baptism of the Holy Spirit, though with some significant differences in nuance and meaning.”<sup>78</sup>

Blumhofer summarizes these movements that provided the roots for the Pentecostal understanding of the baptism in the Holy Spirit:

In various settings, some late nineteenth-century evangelicals promoted an individual encounter with the Holy Spirit. Some regarded the encounter as a sanctifying event and a work of grace and others stressed its empowering and regarded it as a gift of faith. Some understood it within the experiential context of

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<sup>75</sup> Dayton, *Theological Roots*, 105.

<sup>76</sup> A. B. Simpson, *The Four-Fold Gospel* (New York: Christian Alliance, 1890).

<sup>77</sup> Zenas Bicket, *The Assemblies of God: Our 16 Doctrines* (Springfield, MO: Gospel, n.d.).

<sup>78</sup> Dayton, *Theological Roots*, 108.

American Wesleyan thought; others saw themselves as differing significantly with Wesleyan thought on sanctification and perceived the contemporary repetition of the Pentecost event as eschatologically significant, a sign of the end times. For them, holiness and spiritual power were specifically end-times necessities. Some expressed their spiritual yearnings in Christocentric language; some dedicated themselves to the realization of restorationist hopes. Together these groups helped set in motion thought patterns and experiential expectations that motivated prayer for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in a worldwide revival and influenced the development of Pentecostalism.<sup>79</sup>

Chapter 2 will seek to gain a sense of the heartbeat of the restorationists by analyzing their own words. In particular, chapter 2 will explore the urgency expressed regarding four doctrines that were central to their outlook.

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<sup>79</sup> Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God*, 63f.

## CHAPTER 2

### PENTECOSTAL FORERUNNERS: IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Christians in the Holiness, Higher Life, and Keswick movements were passionate in their insistence that Christian faith maintain vitality. This chapter provides a sense of their passion by exploring their own words.<sup>1</sup> Four key doctrines guide this process: salvation, baptism in the Holy Spirit, divine healing, and the second coming of Christ. In restorationist thinking, each of these areas is important to vital Christianity. Salvation marks the beginning of vital Christian experience; baptism in the Holy Spirit provides the power for Christian life and ministry; divine healing is a key evidence of a restored and Spirit-empowered apostolic faith; and the second coming of Jesus Christ provides the motive for Christian life and ministry.

#### Salvation

Salvation is the starting point for any authentic apostolic faith. In salvation, a fundamental, God-wrought change occurs in one's relationship to God and within oneself. In *The Four-Fold Gospel*, Simpson describes the nature of these changes. He expounds on eight perils from which salvation saves a person and eight benefits salvation affords. In Simpson's view, the perils from which salvation saves include: the

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter interacts with figures from the Reformed branch of restorationism, and does not consider Wesleyan Holiness contributions for two reasons: first, in an attempt to limit the scope of this paper's research; and second, because the church for whom the author is ultimately engaged in this project is part of the branch of Pentecostalism that grew out of the reformed branch of restorationism.



guilt of sin, the wrath of God, the curse of the law, our evil conscience, an evil heart, the fear of death, Satan's power and kingdom, and eternal death.<sup>2</sup> Conversely, the benefits of salvation are forgiveness of all our sins, justification in the sight of God, the favor and love of God, a new heart, grace to live day by day, the help of the Holy Spirit, an open avenue for all the blessings that follow salvation, and eternal life.<sup>3</sup>

Salvation is possible because of the death of Christ on the cross. Torrey explains that Christ's death "was the price paid to redeem others from death. . . . He, through the shedding of His blood, or death, is that by which the wrath of God against us as sinners is appeased."<sup>4</sup> Salvation is appropriated by faith, but true faith is far more than intellectual assent to doctrinal statements. True faith is believing "with the heart." This kind of faith engages the whole person. Torrey writes, "To believe 'with the heart,' is to believe with the whole man. It involves the surrender of the thought, the feelings and the will to the truth believed. A heart faith is more than mere opinion. It is a conviction that governs the whole inner man and consequently shapes the outward life."<sup>5</sup>

Salvation was often described using the language of new birth. Torrey provides a perspective on the importance placed on the experience of new birth:

The New Birth is a most desirable and glorious experience. Just to think that the All Holy God comes to men sunken in sin, dead through trespasses and sins, the vilest of sinners, blind, corrupt, perverse, and imparts to them His own wise, holy

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<sup>2</sup> Simpson, *The Four-Fold Gospel*, 8-12.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 12-16.

<sup>4</sup> R. A. Torrey, *What the Bible Teaches* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1898), 146-147. For a complete picture of Torrey's teaching on salvation see: *What the Bible Teaches*, book 2, chapters 5-6; and book 4, chapters 5-10.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 318.

and glorious nature. The doctrine of the New Birth is one of the most precious and inspiring in the Word of God.<sup>6</sup>

The language of new birth emphasizes that true Christian life begins with an impartation of God's own life. This results in a personal, living relationship with God. New birth points to a vital spiritual reality, in which "the divine life [is] imparted to us—the very life of very God communicated to the human soul, and bringing forth there its own proper fruit."<sup>7</sup>

This new life was held forth as having sufficient power to offer hope to anyone, regardless of how broken or sinful. Simpson writes:

Salvation is possible to him that believeth. No matter how vile the sin, how many or how great the sins, how aggravated the guilt, how deep the corruption, how long the career of impenitence and crime, it is everywhere and forever true, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." "Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved." And thus alone can any soul be saved, for it is just as true forever, no matter what qualifications the soul may possess, whether the highest morality or the deepest depravity, "He that believeth not shall be damned." This blessed text opens the gates of Paradise and all the possibilities of grace to any and every sinner, and "whosoever will, may come, and take the Water of Life freely."<sup>8</sup>

The result is a life in which one's true, godly potential flourishes:

[T]he human heart . . . is but a barren possibility. It may struggle its best to develop itself, but like the sagebrush and the stunted palms that cover the western deserts, it will develop only feebly. But drop into that heart the living Christ, and flood it with the water of the Spirit's fullness, and it realizes its true ideal. The promise of Jesus' own simple parable is perfectly fulfilled: "If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 327.

<sup>7</sup> Gordon, *The Twofold Life*, 22.

<sup>8</sup> Simpson, *The Four-Fold Gospel*, 5-6. All scripture references in this chapter are from the King James Version of the Bible.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 37.

Simpson sums up this new life of union with God through Christ as “the uniting of man with the Son of God and the exalting of the redeemed sinner to fellowship with a higher Being. Thus, eternally like his Lord, the redeemed person will be not merely a good man or woman but a person united with God, possessing the spirit and nature of Jehovah.”<sup>10</sup>

Smith describes the dynamics of a vital, living relationship with God in *The Christian’s Secret of a Happy Life*.<sup>11</sup> With chapters that deal with subjects such as consecration, doubts, temptation, and failures, this book provides a handbook on the spiritual life. The following brief analysis demonstrates how the doctrine of salvation translates into a lived relationship with God.<sup>12</sup>

This examination of *The Christian’s Secret of a Happy Life* begins with the notion of spiritual hunger. Smith believed that the human soul longs for a deep, experiential encounter with God, and that people sorely feel the lack when such an encounter is absent. Knowledge of the scriptures, in and of itself, will not satisfy the longing of the soul. Smith writes to unsatisfied believers:

You have carefully studied the Holy Scriptures, and have gathered much precious truth therefrom, which you have trusted would feed and nourish your spiritual life, but in spite of it all, your souls are starving and dying within you, and you cry out in secret, again and again, for that bread and water of life which you see promised

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>11</sup> Smith, *The Christian’s Secret*.

<sup>12</sup> One might be surprised to find a treatment of *The Christian’s Secret of a Happy Life* in this discussion about regeneration. Smith’s book is really a book about sanctification; however, it is relevant to this discussion because it illustrates the living, dynamic relationship with God that is set in motion in regeneration. Smith’s treatment of sanctification is rooted in the conviction that a personal relationship with God is not only possible, it is essential to vital Christianity. This analysis focuses on the nature of this personal relationship.

in the Scriptures to all believers. In the very depths of your hearts, you know that your experience is not a Scriptural experience.<sup>13</sup>

Smith insists that Christian faith be deeply and inwardly experienced, and that this deep, personal, and direct encounter has the power to transform the life of the believer. She writes, “A real work is to be wrought in us and upon us. Besetting sins are to be conquered; evil habits are to be overcome; wrong dispositions and feelings are to be rooted out, and holy transformation is to take place. So at least the Bible teaches.”<sup>14</sup> Not everyone, however, has this experience:

You have had perhaps a clear understanding of doctrinal truths, but you have not come into possession of their life and power. You have rejoiced in your knowledge of the things revealed in the Scriptures, but have not had a living realization of the things themselves, consciously felt in the soul. Christ is believed in, talked about, and served, but He is not known as the soul’s actual and very life, abiding there forever, and revealing Himself there continually in His beauty. You have found Jesus as your Saviour from the penalty of sin, but you have not found Him as your Saviour from its power.<sup>15</sup>

These people end up viewing their beliefs through the lens of their experience (or lack of experience). As a result, they live with lowered expectations concerning the quality of their Christian lives. Smith suggests, “You have been forced to settle down to the conviction, that the best you can expect from your religion is a life of alternative failure and victory, one hour sinning, and the next repenting, and then beginning again, only to fail again, and again to repent.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 16-17.

Smith believes that an individual's part is "to trust, and God's part is to work"<sup>17</sup> to restore vibrancy to defeated, nominal Christianity. Trust entails continual surrender to God, coupled with expectancy. Smith writes, "Having, therefore, taken the step of faith by which you have put yourself wholly and absolutely into His hands, you must now expect Him to begin to work."<sup>18</sup> Trust, however, is not wholly passive, for, "In the divine order, God's working depends upon our co-operation."<sup>19</sup> Co-operation is an obedient surrender, by which individuals side with God concerning anything God might do in their lives. Using the illustration of a physician with a patient, Smith writes, "God must have the whole case put into His hands without reserves, and His directions must be implicitly followed."<sup>20</sup>

Implicit obedience occurs only in the presence of implicit trust. Smith points to three expressions of trust in God. First is an unflinching faith in God's nearness, together with a corresponding sense of intimacy with God. Smith writes, "What we need . . . is to see that God's presence is a certain fact always, and that every act of our soul is done before Him, and that a word spoken in prayer is as really spoken to Him as if our eyes could see Him and our hands could touch Him."<sup>21</sup> Smith reflects this sense of intimacy in

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 63.

her definition of the higher Christian life, which “is best described in the words, the ‘life hid with Christ in God.’”<sup>22</sup>

Second is the firm conviction of Christ’s presence, power, and will to act in the life of believers. “In the very outset,” Smith states, “settle down on this one thing, that Jesus came to save you now, in this life, from the power and dominion of sin, and to make you more than conquerors through His power.”<sup>23</sup>

According to Smith, a third expression of trust in God involves confidence in God’s providential dealings. Christians must trust that, regardless of the circumstances, God works His loving intentions in all that occurs:

[God] disciplines and trains by inward exercises and outward providences. He brings to bear upon us all the refining and purifying resources of His wisdom and His love. He makes everything in our lives and circumstances subservient to the one great purpose of causing us to grow in grace, and of conforming us, day by day and hour by hour, to the image of Christ.<sup>24</sup>

In a word, for Smith the chief characteristics of the life hid with God in Christ are an entire surrender to the Lord and a perfect trust in the Lord. This surrender and trust result in victory over sin and an inward rest of the soul.<sup>25</sup>

### **Baptism in the Holy Spirit**

If regeneration marks the beginning of the Christian life, the baptism of the Holy Spirit provides power for Christian life and ministry. The Holiness, Higher Life, and

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 29-30.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 37.

Keswick movements gave Pentecostals the substantive foundation for their doctrine of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. To understand why the emphasis on the Holy Spirit was so important to Pentecostals and their predecessors requires understanding the convictions and urgencies that drove this doctrine to the forefront.

A. J. Gordon observes, “Almost every great conquest of preaching or working recorded in the Acts is introduced by the words, ‘*and being filled with the Holy Ghost.*’”<sup>26</sup> For Gordon, the book of Acts is a record of “the life of the Spirit seen in the words and deeds of the body of Believers. . . . [Which demonstrates] the Invisible made visible in working and conduct and testimony.”<sup>27</sup>

In *The Baptism with the Holy Spirit*, Torrey testifies, “It was a great turning point in my ministry when . . . I became satisfied that the Baptism with the Holy Spirit was an experience for to-day and for me, and set myself about obtaining it. Such blessing came to me personally.”<sup>28</sup> He was emphatic that “The Baptism with the Holy Spirit is an absolutely necessary preparation for effective service for Christ along every line of service.”<sup>29</sup>

In a chapter entitled, “The Baptism with the Holy Spirit: What it Is And What it Does,” Torrey defines the baptism with the Holy Spirit as “the Spirit of God coming upon the believer, taking possession of his faculties, imparting to him gifts not naturally his

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<sup>26</sup> Gordon, *The Twofold Life*, 77.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>28</sup> Torrey, *The Baptism*, 5.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 24.

own, but which qualify him for the service to which God has called him.”<sup>30</sup> He expounds three assertions that capture the distinctives of restorationist belief about the baptism with the Holy Spirit. First, “the Baptism with the Holy Spirit is a definite experience of which one may know whether he has received it or not;” second, “The baptism with the Holy Spirit is a work of the Holy Spirit separate and distinct from His regenerating work;” and third, “The Baptism with the Holy Spirit is always connected with testimony and service.”<sup>31</sup>

In the matter of preaching, the evidence of power is not found in sermonistic eloquence, but in “that lightning-like penetration of the spoken word which rives men’s hearts, and lays bare their sins, and brings out the tears of penitence.”<sup>32</sup> In fact, “Oftentimes . . . what have seemed, humanly speaking, the weakest efforts, have often fallen with unaccountable power upon the hearts of the hearers.”<sup>33</sup> The key to understanding this is to discern the difference between human ability and the power of the Holy Spirit:

Words, kindled and glowing with the fire of intellectual excitement, can rouse and thrill and overpower, till the effect seems something quite supernatural. But intellect and the Holy Spirit must not be confounded. The highest reach of genius comes far short of the lowest degree of inspiration. To electrify a hearer is one thing; to bring a hearer prostrate at the feet of Jesus is quite another. The one effect is “in word only”; the other is “in power and in the Holy Ghost.” And the

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 14-16.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>33</sup> Gordon, *The Twofold Life*, 89.



latter result we have often seen accomplished through the plainest speech, and by the humblest instruments.<sup>34</sup>

Commenting on this phenomenon, Gordon refers to “a reiteration of a lesson which we are very slow to learn, that it is ‘not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD.’”<sup>35</sup> Mahan said of preachers and their preaching, “Logic, education, oratory, eloquence, physical force, all excellent in themselves, cannot take the place of the influence of the Spirit.”<sup>36</sup>

While many would share these convictions, not all would take them to their logical conclusions. Charles Finney comments on the gap that can exist between belief and practice:

It is amazing that while it is generally admitted that the enduement of power from on high is a reality, and essential to ministerial success, practically it should be treated by the churches and by the schools as of comparatively little importance. In theory it is admitted to be everything, but in practice treated as if it were nothing.<sup>37</sup>

Gordon raised a kindred cry, which seems perennially relevant:

But what we have most reason to fear is that subtle materialism which is creeping into our church life and methods. How little dependence is there on supernatural power as all sufficient for our work! How much we are coming to lean on mere human agencies!—upon art and architecture, upon music and rhetoric and social attraction! If we would draw the people to church that we may win them to Christ, the first question with scores of Christians nowadays is, what new turn can be given to the kaleidoscope of entertainment? . . . Oh for a faith to abandon utterly

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 51-52.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 89. This scripture verse that Gordon quotes pervaded the early Pentecostal psyche.

<sup>36</sup> Mahan, *The Baptism of the Holy Spirit*, 75.

<sup>37</sup> Finney, *Power from on High*, 37.

these devices of naturalism, and to throw the church without reserve upon the power of the supernatural!<sup>38</sup>

Effective ministry, therefore, must be Spirit-dependent, and Spirit-dependence and prayer-dependence were nearly synonymous. E. M. Bounds identifies people of prayer as those whom the Holy Spirit can use: “What the Church needs to-day is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more and novel methods, but *men whom the Holy Ghost can use—men of prayer, men mighty in prayer* [emphasis added]. The Holy Ghost . . . does not anoint plans, but men—men of prayer.”<sup>39</sup>

Dwight Moody stands as an example of someone who, as a result of prayer, learned the importance Holy Spirit baptism of the empowerment for ministry. In one of his autobiographical accounts,<sup>40</sup> he recounts the story of two women who would come to his meetings. These women were praying for him because he needed power. He writes:

I said to myself; “Why, I thought I had power.” I had a large Sabbath school, and the largest congregation in Chicago. There were *some* conversions at the time, and I was in a sense satisfied. But right along these two godly women kept praying for me, and their earnest talk about “the anointing for special service” set me thinking. I asked them to come and talk with me, and we got down on our knees. They poured out their hearts, that I might receive the anointing of the Holy Ghost.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Gordon, *The Twofold Life*, 13-14.

<sup>39</sup> E. M. Bounds, *Preacher and Prayer* (Chicago: Christian Witness, 1907), 7.

<sup>40</sup> Quoted in Gordon, *The Twofold Life*, 277-78.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 277.

Moody says he began to experience and increasing hunger in his soul until, “I really felt that I did not want to live any longer if I could not have this power for service. I kept on crying all the time that God would fill me with his Spirit.”<sup>42</sup>

As a result of his quest for spiritual power for ministry, Moody claimed to have had a life-changing baptism in the Holy Spirit. He writes, “One day . . . oh what a day! I cannot describe it. . . . It is almost too sacred an experience to name. . . . I can only say, God revealed Himself to me, and I had such an experience of His love that I had to ask Him to stay His hand.”<sup>43</sup> After that experience, Moody saw a change in his ministry. He observed that when he started preaching again, “The sermons were not different; I did not present any new truths, and yet hundreds were converted. . . . I would not be placed back where I was before that blessed experience if you would give me all Glasgow.”<sup>44</sup> Moody later reflected, “God has been good to me. He has showered blessing after blessing upon me; but the greatest blessing, next to being born again, came 16 years after, when I was filled with the Spirit, and it has never left me.”<sup>45</sup>

At his summer conference at Northfield, Massachusetts, Moody urged the people, “Let us pray that we may be baptized with power from on high . . . that we may be always ready—ready for anything.”<sup>46</sup> To those entering ministry, whether lay or

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 277-78.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 278.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> D. L. Moody, “Testimony of D. L. Moody,” *Institute Tie* (September 1900): 2, quoted in Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God*, 51.

<sup>46</sup> D. L. Moody, “Enduement for Service,” in *D. L. Moody at Home*, ed. T. J. Shanks (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1886), 261, quoted in Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*, 31.

ordained, he appealed, “Let me beg of you: Get full of the Holy Ghost. Just make up your minds you will not leave these gatherings until God fills you.”<sup>47</sup>

The power of the Holy Spirit was important to Christian living and to Christian ministry because believers face spiritual opposition. Gordon observes, “When something extraordinary is to be done for Christ, hell from beneath will be moved to resist it.”<sup>48</sup> The Holy Spirit can empower Christians to fight spiritual battles. Another reason Christians need this power is to overcome their own inner, spiritual entropy, Mahan testifies:

How many thousands there are in the churches who have been converted, but are yet without the baptism of the Holy Ghost! They have been baptized with water, and believed according to the use of that term; but ask their hearts and their lives, “Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?” Their doubts and fears, their lukewarmness and selfishness, their bigotry and worldliness, their errings and falls, give the answer.<sup>49</sup>

The message here is clear: the Holy Spirit’s empowering is key to maintaining spiritual vitality.

### **Divine Healing**

The restorationists emphasized Jesus as a healer. Divine healing was, for them, an evidence of a restored and Spirit-empowered apostolic faith. In the opening chapter of *The Ministry of Healing*, Gordon writes:

[W]e trust it will not be presumption to say that the Church in every direction needs to be re-shaped to the apostolic model and re-invested with her apostolic powers. For is it not apparent that between the indignant clamor of skeptics

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<sup>47</sup> D. L. Moody, “Concentration and Consecration,” in *A College of Colleges*, ed. T. J. Shanks (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1887), 217, quoted in Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*, 31.

<sup>48</sup> Gordon, *The Twofold Life*, 57-58.

<sup>49</sup> Mahan, *The Baptism of the Holy Spirit*, 21.

against primitive miracles, and the stern frowning of theologians upon any alleged modern miracles, the Lord's people are in danger of being frightened out of their faith in the supernatural.<sup>50</sup>

In this book Gordon bemoans the loss of spiritual vitality in churches as evidenced by dependence on artistic music, expensive buildings, culture and eloquence in the pulpit; dependence on literary and social entertainments for drawing people; and dependence on fairs and festivals for paying expenses. He considers these to be professions of weakness that churches are unconsciously putting forth:

And all this from churches that count themselves to be the body of Christ and the habitation of God through the Spirit! Is not this an infinite descent from the primitive records of power and success—the Lord ‘confirming the word *with signs following*,’ and the preaching which was ‘not with enticing word of man’s wisdom but in *demonstration of the Spirit and of power*?’<sup>51</sup>

He concludes, “How deeply we need the demonstration of the Spirit in these days!”<sup>52</sup>

It is significant that Gordon raised these concerns in the context of his book on divine healing. His concern is not only to make a case for the legitimacy of divine healing for the contemporary church. His concern is that the recovery of this doctrine be part of a larger recovery of the church from spiritual decline. Simpson concurs and writes of the doctrine of divine healing:

In spite of the cold and conservative and sometimes scornful unbelief of many, this doctrine is becoming one of the touchstones of character and spiritual life . . . and revolutionising, by a deep, quiet and Divine movement, the whole Christian life of thousands. It has a profound bearing upon the spiritual life. No one can truly receive it without being a holier and more useful Christian.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> A. J. Gordon, *The Ministry of Healing* (Boston: C. M. A. Twichell, 1882), 2, 3.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-11.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>53</sup> A. B. Simpson, *The Gospel of Healing* (1888; repr., London: Morgan and Scott, 1913), 2.

The reason divine healing is connected with the recovery of spiritual vitality is that healing results from an out-flowing of the very life of the resurrected Lord. Simpson writes, “The Risen and Ascended One is the Fountain of our strength and life. . . . This is the great, the vital, the most precious principle of physical healing in the name of Jesus.”<sup>54</sup> Further, “It is the life of Jesus which supplies the source of health and life for our redeemed bodies. The body of Christ is the living fountain of all our vital strength.”<sup>55</sup> Because of this, “The power which heals the body usually imparts a much richer baptism of the Holy Ghost to the heart.”<sup>56</sup> The result is that, “The true doctrine of healing through the Lord Jesus Christ . . . exalts the name of Jesus, glorifies God, inspires the soul with faith and power, summons to a life of self-denial and holy service, and awakens a slumbering Church and an unbelieving world with the solemn signals of a living God and a risen Christ.”<sup>57</sup>

This recovery from spiritual decline is nothing less than a return to the vitality of the early church. Simpson argues:

With a reviving faith, with a deepening spiritual life, with a more marked and Scriptural recognition of the Holy Spirit and the living Christ, and with the nearer approach of the returning Master Himself, this blessed gospel of physical redemption is beginning to be restored to its ancient place and the Church is slowly learning to reclaim what she never should have lost.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 70-71.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 6-7.

According to Simpson, if divine healing marks a return to the vitality of the early church, it is also a harbinger of the return of Christ, and a stimulus to faithfulness in light of His coming:

These wonderful manifestations of the power of God, which we are beginning to see, are perhaps significant signals of the end, forerunners of the Great Appearing. As they marked the period of His presence on earth, so they will attend His return. And they bid us prepare in solemn earnest for His Advent. With our eyes no longer on the grave, but on the opening heavens, and our hearts feeling already some of the pulses of that resurrection life, it is ours to watch and work as none others can; not holding ourselves back in anxious self-care, but working in His great might, in season and out of season.<sup>59</sup>

### **The Second Coming of Jesus Christ**

If regeneration marked the beginning of vital Christian experience, baptism in the Holy Spirit provided the power for Christian life and ministry, divine healing was an evidence of a restored and Spirit-empowered apostolic faith; then the second coming of Jesus Christ provided a motive for Christian life and ministry.

Gordon called the imminent return of the Lord from heaven “the chief motive by which duties, obligations, aspirations, and attainments are determined in the New Testament.”<sup>60</sup> Gordon used several examples from the spectrum of Christian life and ministry to demonstrate his point. The second coming of Christ motivates Christians to holiness of life and patient endurance amid trials:

Is holy living urged? This is the inspiring motive thereto: “That, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, *looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the*

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 95-96.

<sup>60</sup> A. J. Gordon, *Ecce Venit* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1889), 30.

*great god and our Saviour Jesus Christ*" (Titus ii.13). Is endurance under persecution and loss of goods enjoined? This is the language of the exhortation: "Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. *For yet a little while and He that shall come will come and will not tarry*" (Heb. x. 35-37). Is patience under trial encouraged in the Christian? The admonition is: "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts, *for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh*" (James v. 8). Is sanctification set before us for our diligent seeking? The duties leading up to it culminate in this: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless *at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (1 Thess. v. 23).<sup>61</sup>

The second coming of Christ motivates pastors to diligence in pastoral care and fidelity to God's word in preaching:

Is diligence in caring for the flock of God enjoined upon pastors? This is the reward: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; . . . *and when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*" (1 Peter v. 4) Is fidelity to the gospel trust charged upon the ministry? This is the end thereof: "That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, *until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (1 Tim. vi. 14) And again: "I charge thee in the sight of God and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the quick and the dead, *and by His appearing and His kingdom, preach the word*" (2 Tim. iv. 1).<sup>62</sup>

The second coming of Jesus provides more than just motive for Christian living; it invigorates the Christian journey:

Some accept merely the earthly life of Christ, knowing Him only after the flesh; and the religion of such is rarely more than a cold, external morality. Others receive His vicarious death and resurrection, but seem not to have strength as yet to follow Him into the heavens; such may be able to rejoice in their justification without knowing much of walking in the glorified life of Christ. Blessed are they who, believing all that has gone before—life, death, and resurrection—can joyfully add this confession also: "*We have a great High Priest who is passed through the heavens;*" and thrice blessed they who can join to this confession still another: "*From whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.*" For

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 8-9.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 9.



it is the essential part of our Redeemer's priesthood that, having entered in, to make intercession for His people, He shall again come forth to bless them."<sup>63</sup>

For Gordon, the doctrine of Christ's imminent return also had sanctifying power:

"The power of His coming is to be constantly operating in the present day. As God has appointed the moon to lift the tide by its attraction . . . so has He ordained this great event of Christ's *parousia* to draw up the faith and hope and love of the Church, when these have ebbed towards the world."<sup>64</sup>

Indeed, nothing can compensate for the hope of Christ's coming, for "One love conquers another; and only by tasting 'the powers of the world to come' can there be wrought in us a radical and enduring distaste for the vanities of the world that now is."<sup>65</sup> Torrey attests, "The blessed hope transformed my whole idea of life; it broke the power of the world and its ambition over me."<sup>66</sup> For Torrey, the expectation of Christ's return provides motivation for Christian living. He writes, "The fact of the Coming Again of Jesus Christ is the great Bible argument for a life of watchfulness, wisdom, activity, simplicity, self-restraint, prayer and abiding in Christ."<sup>67</sup>

Belief in Christ's immanent return strengthens Christians to be faithful to Christ even when suffering hardship. Gordon writes, "By the vision of a millennial crown and

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 2-3.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>66</sup> Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God*, 24.

<sup>67</sup> Torrey, *What the Bible Teaches*, 196.

throne, the heart is reconciled to a present cross and humiliation.”<sup>68</sup> In commenting on the Apostle Paul’s words in Philippians 3:20 that the believer’s citizenship is in heaven, from where Christians await the Savior, Gordon notes, “The men who conquered the Roman Empire for Christ bore the aspect of invaders from another world, who absolutely refused to be naturalized to this world.”<sup>69</sup> Yet as Christians are strengthened, they are also comforted as they live in light of Christ’s return, and Torrey writes, “The coming again of Jesus Christ is the doctrine with which God bids us to comfort sorrowing saints.”<sup>70</sup> Christians need never despair, for, as Torrey uses the words of Isaiah, “Behold, the Lord God will come with a strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.”<sup>71</sup>

### Summary

The nineteenth-century restorationists surveyed in this chapter demonstrate passion about a spiritual reality that was profoundly transformational. Though thoroughly anchored in Scripture, they insisted that the truths of Scripture pointed to a God who can be encountered deeply and personally through Jesus Christ. This encounter was experiential in that it pervaded their daily experiences as well as their ultimate hopes.

They took seriously the depth of human sin and the desperation of the fallen human condition; therefore, the need for a salvation that was nothing less than a need for

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<sup>68</sup> Gordon, *Ecce Venit*, 34.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>70</sup> Torrey, *What the Bible Teaches*, 195.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

a new birth, in which God imparts life to people. It is by this impartation that human potential flourishes, as people enlist in a life of implicit obedience to the Lord.

They likewise took seriously the futility of ministry performed in human strength alone, and the necessity of God's gracious, powerful intervention to save people or to effect change. The conviction that the sinful human condition is desperate and that the power of the Holy Spirit is critical to effective ministry left these Pentecostal forebears in a position of radical dependence upon God to make Christian life and ministry effective. They were desperate for the power of God to attend their ministries. They saw no alternatives, no substitutes for the power God manifested through the Holy Spirit. Stripped of all confidence in the potency of human effort, they assumed a posture of urgent, persistent prayer and sole confidence in God.

Although desperate, they were far from despairing because the conviction that God is active in the world energized their lives. Divine healing offers hopeful evidence of God's activity. They recognized that through healing Jesus pours out of his resurrection life for the well-being of humanity. And Jesus' healing activity represents only part of God's greater activity. The story of God's future energized these restorationists. God's planned future involves Jesus coming again; and they borrowed strength daily from the reality of God's future.

These doctrines of salvation, baptism in the Holy Spirit, divine healing, and the second coming of Christ became core doctrines of early Pentecostalism. The sense of urgency and passion fueled by these doctrines energized the early Pentecostals. Chapter 3 turns to the Pentecostals and discusses the genesis of the Azusa Street revival.

### CHAPTER 3

#### THE GENESIS OF THE AZUSA STREET REVIVAL

This chapter recounts the beginnings of the Azusa Street revival, which played a central role in the flourishing of Pentecostalism into a worldwide movement. First, the chapter considers a few of the harbingers of the Pentecostal movement, culminating in the Azusa Street revival. Then it describes the story of the genesis of the Azusa Street revival focusing on Charles Parham and William J. Seymour, the defining figures in the rise of Pentecostalism.

Charles Parham is generally recognized as the theological founder of the Pentecostal movement and formulator of Pentecostal doctrine.<sup>1</sup> Parham's key theological contribution was the doctrine of tongues as the initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. William J. Seymour was the pastor of the Apostolic Faith Mission, located at 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles, California. The Apostolic Faith Mission was the home of the Azusa Street revival, which took place between 1906 and 1909. According to Cecil Robeck, "Pentecostalism first attracted attention in January 1901 under the ministry of Charles Fox Parham. Its dynamism, however, came from the three year revival . . . at the Apostolic Faith Mission . . . led by the African American, William Joseph Seymour."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Owens, "The Azusa Street Revival: The Pentecostal Movement Begins in America," in *The Century of the Holy Spirit*, ed. Vinson Synan (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 42.

<sup>2</sup> Cecil M. Robeck, "Pentecostalism," in *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*, ed. Alistair Mason, Adrian Hastings, and Hugh Pyper (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 530.

Walter J. Hollenweger notes that most Pentecostal historians mention Parham and Seymour as co-founders of the movement.<sup>3</sup>

### Harbingers of the Azusa Street Revival

B. F. Lawrence, the first historian of the Pentecostal movement,<sup>4</sup> celebrated the Pentecostal, or Apostolic Faith, Movement as a direct reversion to New Testament life and practice.<sup>5</sup> According to Lawrence, the Pentecostal movement stood in stark contrast to established denominations, which, over time, formulated their own precedents, habits, and customs. These denominations became “possessed of a two-fold inheritance, a two-fold guide of action, a two-fold criterion of doctrine—the New Testament and the church position.”<sup>6</sup> By way of contrast, Lawrence asserts, “The Pentecostal Movement has no such History; it leaps the intervening years crying, ‘*Back to Pentecost.*’”<sup>7</sup>

While Lawrence possessed zeal in articulating this fresh Pentecostal phenomenon, the movement did not leap the intervening years. Rather, it took root in the intervening years. Dayton’s summary is to the point:

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<sup>3</sup> Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 20.

<sup>4</sup> W. E. Warner, “Lawrence, Bennett Freeman,” in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley M. Burgess (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 834.

<sup>5</sup> B. F. Lawrence, *The Apostolic Faith Restored*, in *Three Early Pentecostal Tracts*, ed. Donald W. Dayton (New York: Garland, 1985), 11-13.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* Underscoring this a-historical perspective, Lawrence writes, “This reversion to the New Testament . . . is . . . responsible for . . . the absence of any serious effort on the part of the movement to trace an historical connection with the primitive church.”

By the mid-1890s almost every branch of the Holiness and “higher life” movements of the nineteenth century, as well as the revivalism of the period in general, was teaching a variation of some sort or another on the baptism of the Holy Spirit, though with some significant differences in nuance and meaning. . . . It is thus no accident that Pentecostalism emerged when it did. All that was needed was the spark that would ignite this volatile tinder.<sup>8</sup>

Foreshadows of the Pentecostal revival can be detected in the sermons of eminent preachers. In 1857, the British preacher Charles Spurgeon delivered a sermon entitled “The Power of the Holy Spirit,” in which he stated, “Another great work of the Holy Spirit, which is not accomplished is *the bringing on of the latter-day glory*. In a few more years—I know not when, I know not how—the Holy Spirit will be poured out in far different style from the present.”<sup>9</sup>

Around the same time, William Arthur published *The Tongue of Fire*, in which he anticipates characteristically Pentecostal manifestations of the Holy Spirit:

Whatever is necessary to the holiness of the individual, to the spiritual life and ministering gifts of the church, or to the conversion of the world, is as much the heritage of the people of God in the latest days as in the first . . . We feel satisfied that he who does expect the gift of healing and the gift of tongues or any other miraculous manifestation of the Holy Spirit . . . has ten times more scriptural ground on which to base his expectation, than have they for their unbelief who do not expect supernatural sanctifying strength for the believer.<sup>10</sup>

He ends his book with an urgent prayer:

And now, adorable Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, descend upon all the churches, renew the Pentecost in this our age, and baptize thy people generally—O, baptize them yet again with tongues of fire! Crown this nineteenth

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<sup>8</sup> Dayton, *Theological Roots*, 107-08.

<sup>9</sup> Charles H. Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Sermons* (1857; repr. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, n.d.), quoted in Synan, “Pentecostal Roots,” 25.

<sup>10</sup> William Arthur, *The Tongue of Fire* (Columbia, SC: L. L. Pickett, 1891), 288, 315, 375-76, quoted in Synan, “Pentecostal Roots,” 25-26.

century with a revival of 'pure and undefiled religion' greater than that of the last century, greater than that of the first, greater than any demonstrations of the Spirit yet vouchsafed to men!<sup>11</sup>

Another harbinger of Pentecostalism was the occurrence of Pentecostal phenomena prior to the Azusa Street revival. Chapter 2 noted the Pentecostal-like phenomena that occurred in Methodist camp meetings such as the one at Cane Ridge. Isolated reports of people speaking in tongues also preceded the rise of Pentecostalism by a few years. In London, a Scottish-Presbyterian pastor named Edward Irving became convinced of the validity of tongues after investigating a report of miraculous healings and speaking in tongues in the small Scottish town of Port Glasgow. From that time on, Irving taught that tongues reflected an outward sign of the invisible grace conferred in the baptism of the Holy Spirit.<sup>12</sup> In the United States, William Menzies reports at least eleven incidents of speaking in tongues between 1856 and 1900 in New England, Ohio, Minnesota, South Dakota, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas. He notes, "These were all isolated . . . and did not seem to have more than local significance."<sup>13</sup>

In *The Apostolic Faith Restored*, Lawrence chronicles accounts of people baptized in the Holy Spirit, and who spoke in tongues prior to Azusa Street.<sup>14</sup> Lawrence notes,

There is a mistaken impression that this Movement is a mushroom growth, originating in California in 1906. This is not the case. God, Who in sundry places,

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>12</sup> Synan, "Pentecostal Roots," 23.

<sup>13</sup> William W. Menzies, *Anointed to Serve* (Springfield, MO: Gospel, 1971), 29.

<sup>14</sup> Lawrence, *The Apostolic Faith*, 32-52.

at diverse times poured out His Spirit with the sign of tongues, sent the outpouring at Los Angeles after He had prepared for it by smaller, but by no means less genuine, works in other places. Observe, also, how many of our present ministry received the baptism prior to that outpouring.<sup>15</sup>

Menzies notes that the early Pentecostal historian Stanley Frodsham “seems to have obtained the most complete collection of charismatic manifestation data from the pre-1900 period.”<sup>16</sup> Frodsham cites eighteen such incidents, and three examples from his book<sup>17</sup> illustrate this point. In one instance,

In the year 1879, a young man in Arkansas, W. Jethro Walthall, received a mighty enduement from on high. He testified: “At the time I was filled with the Spirit, I could not say what I did, but I was carried out of myself for the time being. Sometimes in the services and sometimes when alone in prayer, I would fall prostrate under God’s mighty power. Once under a great spiritual agitation, I spoke in tongues. I knew nothing of the Bible teaching about the Baptism or speaking in tongues, and thought nothing of what happened in my experience.”<sup>18</sup>

In another instance, Frodsham reports the testimony of Pastor R. B. Swan in Providence, Rhode Island,

In the year 1875 our Lord began to pour out upon us His Spirit; my wife and I, with a few others, began to utter a few words in the ‘unknown tongue.’ I report one incident at this time. A sister was wrought upon by the Spirit to speak. She did not want this gift and kept her lips closed. We labored with her to yield to the Spirit, and when she did, she broke forth in a volume of words in an unknown tongue which continued for quite a time. Her name was Amanda Doughty. Her husband is an elder in my assembly.<sup>19</sup>

One other example from Frodsham’s book involves Daniel Awrey of Delaware, Ohio:

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>16</sup> Menzies, *Anointed to Serve*, 29.

<sup>17</sup> Stanley H. Frodsham, *With Signs Following: The Story of the Pentecostal Revival in the Twentieth Century* (Springfield, MO: Gospel, 1946).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 11-12.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 10.



Nine months after his conversion, on the last night of 1889, while he was reading a spiritual book, he was led into deep communion with the Lord. . . . The Holy Spirit spoke to his heart assuring him that God has for him a new and better experience. That night (January 1, 1890) he attended a prayer meeting. His faith rose and he claimed an immediate fulfillment of the promise given. . . . Suddenly the Spirit fell upon him and he began to pray in an unknown tongue. His wife received a similar experience ten years later.<sup>20</sup>

Frodsham notes a difference in understanding between these nineteenth-century believers and the early Pentecostals,

There were many who received the supernatural speaking in tongues toward the close of the last century. Most of them did not associate the phenomenon with the Baptism in the Spirit received at Pentecost. They considered it one of the signs promised by the Lord in Mark 16, or one of the gifts of the Spirit referred to in the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of first Corinthians.<sup>21</sup>

That would change with Charles Parham.

### **Charles F. Parham**

Charles F. Parham was born in 1873 in Muscatine, Iowa. During his years of chronic illness as a child, Parham came to believe God called him into the ministry. At fifteen, he held his first public meetings, “which were followed with marked results.”<sup>22</sup> In 1891, Parham enrolled in Southwestern Kansas College, a school with Methodist affiliations. During these years he wrestled with his sense of God’s calling. On the one hand, he involved himself in religious work to the point that he performed poorly in academics, and on the other he decided to serve God as a physician instead of becoming a

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid. 15.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 14-15.

<sup>22</sup> Charles F. Parham, “A Voice Crying in the Wilderness,” in *The Sermons of Charles F. Parham*, 4th ed., ed. Donald W. Dayton, (New York: Garland, 1985), 15.

minister: “Having been an invalid for many years, the devil suggested that it would be a most philanthropic work to become a physician; to relieve the suffering of humanity, and then, by and by, have a nice home and some ease and comfort in this world.”<sup>23</sup> In retrospect, Parham believed he had backslidden during these years.<sup>24</sup>

Everything changed for Parham when he contracted rheumatic fever. While bedridden, Parham assessed his life and circumstances, and he came to two conclusions that would shape his life. First, he concluded the devil attempted to divert him from the ministry by enticing him to pursue medicine: “The devil tried to make us believe that we could be a physician and a Christian too; losing ground day after day, became not only guilty of sins of omission but sins of commission as well, until our associates failed to recognize us any as longer being a Christian.”<sup>25</sup> Second, Parham felt that God used sickness to discipline him for disobeying God’s call to the ministry:

Yet as certain as are God’s mercies, so certain are His judgments, which are often times mercies in disguise. For months we suffered the torments of hell, and the flames of rheumatic fever, given up by all physicians and friends. While thus suffering many deaths, knowing we were in rebellion against God, earnestly desiring and coveting to die—vainly expecting relief of soul and body by it—yet realizing the fact that God was dealing with us, and we could not die.<sup>26</sup>

In the midst of this turmoil, “There was a consciousness within, that while we were suffering from disobedience and being sorely punished, some day we would surrender

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 16-17.

our arms of rebellion, and preach the everlasting gospel.”<sup>27</sup> Consequently, Parham renounced his pursuit of medicine and recommitted himself to ministry. He writes, “We repented like a prodigal, received the pardoning kiss, and made a consecration, promising God that—whatever the cost—whether it be Africa, the streets, or the slums, life, or death we would serve Him.”<sup>28</sup>

After making a partial recovery from his illness, Parham returned to school. A short time later he quit school, claiming he received a revelation in which God told him that formal education would hinder his ministry. Parham reported that God healed him of all the remaining effects of his illness.

Parham was a licensed Methodist lay preacher. In 1893, he served as a supply pastor in the Methodist Episcopal Church in Eudora, Kansas and preached to a Methodist congregation in the neighboring town of Linwood on Sunday afternoons. Blumhofer describes Parham as “temperamentally unsuited to cooperate with established authority.”<sup>29</sup> Parham corroborates this point when he writes, “Finding the confines of a pastorate, and feeling the narrowness of sectarian churchism, we were often in conflict with the higher authorities.”<sup>30</sup> Parham soon grew dissatisfied with denominational narrowness and restrictions. He renounced denomination affiliations and began a career as an independent itinerate teacher and evangelist.

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>29</sup> Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God*, 68.

<sup>30</sup> Parham, “A Voice Crying,” 19.

Parham succeeded in his new role. Blumhofer depicts him as having a magnetic personality and being an able preacher:

Parham reportedly held his audiences spellbound. He played on their emotions, handily moving them from tears to laughter. . . . His message was not profound, but the experience he advocated seemed remarkably effective in enriching his hearers. Few of the towns that he and his followers visited would be the same after his departure. Wherever he went, he left behind those who believed that they had been transformed by a powerful encounter with the living Christ. To them, the experience brought a foretaste of heaven into their mundane lives.<sup>31</sup>

Parham's radical holiness message emphasized divine healing and was reinforced by his own testimony of healing. In the summer of 1900, Parham embarked upon a tour of several well-known holiness and healing centers. This trip brought him into contact with John Alexander Dowie in Chicago, J. Walter Malone in Cleveland, Ohio, A.B. Simpson in Nyack, New York, and Frank Sandford in Durham, Maine.

Parham's views solidified as a consequence of his time with Frank Sandford.<sup>32</sup> Parham spent weeks in residence at Shiloh, a community established by Sandford, and he participated with Sandford in a one-month ministry campaign in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Sandford established The Holy Ghost and Us Bible School at Shiloh. The school was the focal point for Sandford's vision of the "restoration of all things," and it became the model for the Parham's own Bible School.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God*, 67-68.

<sup>32</sup> According to William Faupel, "Sandford's major contribution to Pentecostalism came through his impact on the theology and practice of Charles Fox Parham." D. William Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel: The Significance of Eschatology in the Development of Pentecostal Thought* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 158.

<sup>33</sup> Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God*, 77.

The Holy Ghost and Us School was established to uphold the “whole truth” of God. One participant described the educational format,

“Curriculum” there is none: it is the Bible.  
 “Faculty” there is none: it is the Holy Ghost.  
 “Length [of] course” there is none: students go when the Director sends them.  
 This is the Holy Ghost’s work.  
 This is real teaching.  
 This is supernatural.<sup>34</sup>

Sandford sought to lead students “not to the truth, but *into* the truth.” Students, therefore, prayed their lessons into their hearts as each Bible teaching was given. Sandford insisted that believers need to receive the Holy Spirit as a distinct experience in addition to conversion.<sup>35</sup> While at Shiloh, Parham said he heard speaking in tongues for the first time.<sup>36</sup>

Through these various influences, Parham’s message emphasized salvation, healing, sanctification, the second coming of Christ, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit.<sup>37</sup> He sought to restore apostolic faith. Blumhofer describes Sandford’s influence on Parham’s ministry,

Both men practiced healing; both stressed faith living; both taught a specific experience of enduement by the Holy Spirit; both rejected denominations . . . each professed dedication to the cause of Christian unity; both sought to recapture fully the apostolic faith in the end times; each reveled in intense religious experience; both followed impressions he considered “leadings” of the Holy Spirit.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 90.

<sup>37</sup> Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God*, 73.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 80.

In spite of Sanford's influence, Hollenweger notes,

Parham . . . was credited with first advancing the theological argument that tongues are always the initial evidence of a person's receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit. He was also the first to teach that this baptism, including the resulting tongues, should be seen as a part of every Christian's experience, something to be used in normal life and worship, and not just something that would appear during times of great religious fervor.<sup>39</sup>

By 1898, Parham arrived in Topeka, Kansas, and in October, 1900 he opened Bethel Bible School. An ethos of zeal can be heard in Parham's own description of the school:

Its only text-book was the Bible; its only object utter abandonment in obedience to the commandments of Jesus, however unconventional and impractical this might seem to the world today. . . . No collections were taken, no solicitations, no board, no tuition charged. No difference was made whether the students had any means to offer or whether they did not; but one thing was strictly required that they should obey and seek to live the commandments of Jesus.<sup>40</sup>

Of the forty students attending the school Parham said, "Nearly all . . . had been religious workers of considerable spiritual growth and attainment."<sup>41</sup> This was true of Agnes N.

Ozman, a student who stated,

I had been a Bible student for some years and had attended T. C. Horton's Bible School at St. Paul, Minnesota, and Dr. A. B. Simpson's Bible School in New York. In October 1900, I went to this Topeka school, which was known as Bethel College. We studied the Bible by day and did much work downtown at night. Much time was spent in prayer every day and all the time.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 43. Parham describes his position in "A Voice Crying," 35-38.

<sup>40</sup> Parham, "A Voice Crying," 32.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in Frodsham, *With Signs Following*. Frodsham does not indicate the sources of his quotes.

Many of Parham's students, including Ozman, claimed to have been baptized in the Holy Spirit. She said, "At first and for a time I held to the experience I had in praises, joy and answers to prayer, in seeing the sick healed as the Baptism of the Spirit."<sup>43</sup> Instead, Parham taught "a mighty Baptism such as the disciples received of old, to make His saints today world-wide powers for good, to the end that this gospel might be preached to all the world as a witness."<sup>44</sup> Parham's teaching affected Agnes Ozman, and she testified, "Soon I was convinced of a need within. And for about three weeks my heart became hungry for the baptism of the Holy Ghost. I wanted the promise of the Father more than ever I did food or to sleep."<sup>45</sup>

In December 1900, Parham, scheduled to preach in Kansas City for three days, assigned his Bible School students to study the book of Acts in his absence to determine if there is a specific sign, or evidence, of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. It seems clear that Parham already had his answer to this question, but wanted his students to come to it themselves.<sup>46</sup> Upon his return from Kansas City, the students reported that through

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<sup>43</sup> Agnes N. O. LaBerge, *What God Hath Wrought*, ed. Donald W. Dayton (New York: Garland, 1985), 28.

<sup>44</sup> Parham, "A Voice Crying," 33. Parham's understanding of baptism in the Holy Spirit differs from the Wesleyan Holiness understanding. Parham understands baptism in the Holy Spirit as an eschatological sealing, and in one of his sermons he offers an apologetic for a Pentecostal baptism in the Holy Spirit. In answering an imagined objector, Parham replies, "Do you mean to say that John Wesley and others since, did not have this Baptism? Exactly; he and many since have enjoyed a mighty anointing that abideth, and spoke like the holy men of old as they were moved by the Holy Ghost but the power of this Pentecostal Baptism of the Holy Spirit is a different thing entirely. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is especially given now as the sealing. Therefore the sureness of the last days." Parham, "A Voice Crying," 32. Though the nature of this distinction seems unclear, Parham distinguished his message of baptism in the Holy Spirit from the Wesleyan Holiness version.

<sup>45</sup> LaBerge, *What God Hath Wrought*, 28-29.

<sup>46</sup> Synan credits Benjamin Hardin Irwin and his radical Fire-Baptized Holiness Church with providing the conceptual framework for Parham's doctrine of tongues as the Bible evidence of the baptism

fasting, prayer, and Scripture study they had unanimously concluded that speaking in tongues was the biblical proof of the baptism with the Holy Spirit.<sup>47</sup>

Upon hearing the students' response, Parham called a New Year's watch service on December 31, 1900. Apparently the effect of that service lingered into the next day. Ozman recounted, "During the first day of 1901, the presence of the Lord was with us in a marked way, stilling our hearts to wait upon Him for greater things. A spirit of prayer was upon us in the evening."<sup>48</sup> In this prayer meeting Ozman became the first person at the Bible School to speak in tongues. She states,

It was nearly eleven o'clock on this first of January that it came into my heart to ask that hands be laid upon me that I might receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. As hands were laid upon my head the Holy Spirit fell upon me, and I began to speak in tongues, glorifying God. I talked in several languages. It was as though rivers of living water were proceeding from my innermost being.<sup>49</sup>

She "had great joy and was filled with glory."<sup>50</sup> Parham corroborates Ozman's testimony,

I laid my hands upon her and prayed. I had scarcely repeated three dozen sentences when a glory fell upon her, a halo seemed to surround her head and face, and she began speaking the Chinese language and was unable to speak English for three days. When she tried to write in English to tell us of her

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in the Holy Spirit. Synan writes, "By teaching that the baptism of the Holy Ghost was an experience separate from and subsequent to sanctification, [The Fire-Baptized Holiness Church] laid the basic doctrinal premise of the later movement. It is probable that Charles F. Parham . . . received from Irwin the basic idea of a separate baptism of the Holy Ghost following sanctification. Indeed, for a time in 1899, Parham promoted the 'baptism of fire' in his *Apostolic Faith* magazine. In a social, doctrinal, and intellectual sense, the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church was a direct precursor of the modern Pentecostal movement in North America." Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 59.

<sup>47</sup> B. F. Lawrence, in 1916, writes of these students and their conclusion, "This was a bold stand for a little, unknown company of people to take, and it resulted in much persecution." Lawrence, *The Apostolic Faith*, 52-53.

<sup>48</sup> Frodsham, *With Signs Following*, 20.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> LaBerge, *What God Hath Wrought*, 29.



experience she wrote the Chinese, copies of which we still have in newspapers printed at that time.<sup>51</sup>

Ozman's experience encouraged others to wait upon God. Parham writes, "Upon beholding this marvelous restoration of apostolic power in our midst, all became hungry, earnestly desiring a personal realization of the same in our lives. . . . Scarcely eating or sleeping, the school with one accord waited upon God."<sup>52</sup> Within several days, over a dozen students and Parham himself had spoken in tongues.<sup>53</sup>

Soon after this experience, Parham closed the Bible school and embarked on a tour of revival meetings that lasted more than four years. He held unsuccessful meetings in the Missouri towns of Kansas City, Excelsior Springs, and Nevada. Nevertheless, he persevered, and found success in Galena, Kansas in 1903. Attendance at his meetings swelled, fueled by reports of miraculous healings. The meetings in Galena marked a key point for the acceptance Parham and his message. Lawrence writes, "The meeting ran about three months and in the neighborhood of one hundred received the baptism in the

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<sup>51</sup> James R. Goff, *Fields White Unto Harvest* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1988), 67, quoted in Owens, "Azusa Street Revival," 44.

<sup>52</sup> Parham, "A Voice Crying," 34.

<sup>53</sup> Though the purpose of this chapter is not to critically assess the Pentecostal phenomenon of speaking in tongues, the perspective of Douglas Jacobsen is worth noting, "On the one hand, Parham's theology could be seen as having a merely instrumental influence on his students—his theology pointed them in the right direction so they could successfully seek and receive the baptism of the Spirit. On the other hand, one could argue that his theology had a more causal impact, even to the point of, in essence, creating the experience: Wanting the baptism of the Spirit badly enough, and skipping meals and sleep to seek it, his students finally generated an experience of their own based on the vivid description Parham had given them. Both of these dynamics could have been, and probably were, at work at the same time. . . . Whether experience preceded theology . . . or theology preceded experience . . . the basic point is the same: Theology and experience deeply influenced each other within the Pentecostal movement." Douglas Jacobsen, *Thinking in the Spirit: Theologies of the Early Pentecostal Movement* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 4-5.

Spirit, many being saved and healed. From this meeting the news went to many other localities, and the success of the new movement seemed assured.”<sup>54</sup>

Assurance of success notwithstanding, this fledgling movement faced difficult days:

From 1901 to the spring of 1905 with its struggles, persecutions, failures, few successes, seemed a long time to the toiling, faithful few who carried the spark of the holy fire. It seemed that the sodden world would not ignite, that revival fires would never catch; that labor and prayer bore small fruitage in return for the time and strength expended. But, from small beginnings God has frequently brought great endings. Sometimes, we are compelled to plant and plant until we are in despair: but “God giveth the increase.”<sup>55</sup>

After establishing Apostolic Faith assemblies in towns in the vicinity of Galena, Parham took a group of workers to Houston, Texas, where he opened another Bible school in 1905. There he met William J. Seymour. Synan summarizes Parham’s impact on Pentecostalism: “Parham’s teaching laid the doctrinal and experimental foundations of the modern Pentecostal movement. It was Parham’s ideas preached by his followers that produced the Azusa Street revival of 1906 and with it the worldwide Pentecostal movement.”<sup>56</sup>

### **William J. Seymour**

According to Synan, William Durham described William J. Seymour as “the meekest man I ever met,” one who maintained a “helpless dependence upon God,” and

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<sup>54</sup> Lawrence, *The Apostolic Faith*, 53.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>56</sup> Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 89.

who was “so filled with God that you felt the love and power every time you got near him.”<sup>57</sup> Similarly, John G. Lake said of Seymour, “I do not believe that any man in modern times had a more wonderful deluge of God in his life than God gave that dear fellow, and the glory and power of a real Pentecost swept the world.”<sup>58</sup>

Seymour was born May 2, 1870 in Centerville, Louisiana, a small town about eighty miles southwest of New Orleans. His parents, Simon and Phyllis, were former slaves. William was baptized in the Roman Catholic Church in nearby Franklin on September 4, 1870 at four months old. In 1883, the Seymours moved a short distance from Centerville to Verdunville. They maintained their membership in the Catholic Church; however, it is likely they also attended the Baptist church adjacent to their new home. William had little or no formal education, but he could read and write.

The African American slave culture strongly influenced the area where the Seymours lived. There arose a syncretistic Catholicism that incorporated Hoodoo, a popular variation of Voodoo. This syncretism attempted to preserve African beliefs and practices that included spells, incantations, and sympathetic magic. Thus, William Seymour, as Robeck notes, “[spent his] formative years in the context where the supernatural was taken for granted, where spirits, both ‘good’ and ‘evil’ were commonly

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<sup>57</sup> Quoted in Vinson Synan, “The Lasting Legacies of the Azusa Street Revival,” *Enrichment* 11, no. 2 (Spring 2006): 145. Synan does not cite his source for Durham’s descriptions of Seymour.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

discussed, and where dreams and visions were understood to contain messages that sometimes foretold the future.”<sup>59</sup>

By 1894, Seymour had relocated to Indianapolis, Indiana. While in Indiana he affiliated with an African-American Methodist Episcopal Church where he claimed to have a conversion experience. At this church Seymour probably gained an understanding of the doctrines of justification by faith and entire sanctification.<sup>60</sup> Seymour soon left the Methodist church over two issues. First was the doctrine of premillennialism. Unlike the Methodist Episcopal Church, Seymour believed that Jesus would return to rule over the earth for a thousand year period. Second was “special revelations” (God speaking through dreams, visions, internal voices, and impressions), which Seymour valued highly.<sup>61</sup>

Another influence in Seymour’s ministry came from Martin Wells Knapp, who established God’s Bible School and Missionary Training Home in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1900. Seymour attended classes from 1900 to 1902.<sup>62</sup> The school’s motto was “Back to the Bible,” and the school’s advertising claimed the school was Pentecostal and non-sectarian. “The Bible is our specialty, and is taught by divinely-called, spirit-filled teachers.”<sup>63</sup> The school strengthened Seymour’s view of the premillennial return of Christ

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<sup>59</sup> Cecil M. Robeck, *The Azusa Street Mission and Revival* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 24.

<sup>60</sup> Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel*, 197.

<sup>61</sup> Robeck, *Azusa Street*, 29.

<sup>62</sup> Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 93.

<sup>63</sup> Robeck, *Azusa Street*, 32.

and exposed him to the doctrine of divine healing as provided in the atonement.<sup>64</sup> Further, Knapp believed in special revelation as “impressions” received from God. This would have accorded well with Seymour’s own belief in special revelation.<sup>65</sup>

Seymour affiliated himself with a radical Holiness group in Cincinnati known as the Evening Light Saints.<sup>66</sup> Daniel S. Warner led the Evening Light Saints. Warner “stressed the need to return to the simplistic structures of the New Testament primitive church.”<sup>67</sup> This group took its inspiration from the words of Zechariah 14:7: “It shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light” (KJV).

Seymour adopted positions in his ministry that resemble those of the Evening Light Saints and reflect their influence on him. The Evening Light Saints believed that God would pour out his Spirit and rapture the Church before bringing history to an immanent and cataclysmic end. The Evening Light Saints did not share Seymour’s views about premillennialism or special revelations; however, their beliefs in an eschatological outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the immanent return of Christ were consistent with Seymour’s views. Their teaching on Christian unity led them to practice an inclusiveness that broke down sectarian, class, racial, and gender barriers. The values of unity and inclusiveness came to characterize Seymour’s ministry.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel*, 197.

<sup>65</sup> Robeck, *Azusa Street*, 33.

<sup>66</sup> The Evening Light Saints were the precursor of the Church of God (Anderson, Indiana).

<sup>67</sup> Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel*, 196.

<sup>68</sup> Robeck, *Azusa Street*, 30-31.

An outbreak of smallpox occurred when Seymour lived in Cincinnati, and he contracted the disease. As a result, Seymour lost one eye, which was replaced with an artificial one. Seymour interpreted the loss of his eye as a judgment from God for failing to respond to God's call to ministry. As a result, he left Cincinnati in 1903 to answer God's call.<sup>69</sup>

Seymour relocated to Houston, Texas, which became his home base through 1905. From Houston he went out to conduct evangelistic campaigns in Texas and Louisiana. He traveled to Chicago, where he encountered healing evangelist John G. Lake, and to Jackson, Mississippi, where he sought spiritual advice from the prominent African American clergyman and founder of the Church of Christ (Holiness), USA, Bishop Charles Price Jones.<sup>70</sup>

While in Houston, Seymour met Lucy F. Farrow, the pastor of a small African American holiness congregation that Seymour attended. Their meeting eventually led to the association between Seymour and Parham. In order to sustain herself while pastoring, Farrow worked a variety of jobs, from cook to nanny. Farrow met Parham when he brought a group of his students to minister in Houston, recruited her to work as cook for his organization, and introduced her to his teaching. When Parham's crusade in Houston closed, he offered Farrow a nanny position, caring for his children during his next crusade in Kansas. Farrow agreed and asked Seymour to pastor her congregation while she was away. During the meetings in Kansas, Farrow became persuaded of Parham's

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>70</sup> Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel*, 196; cf. Robeck, *Azusa Street*, 35-36.

teaching about the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues.

She subsequently sought and came into that experience.<sup>71</sup>

After the meetings in Kansas, Parham, his family, and Farrow returned to Houston. Parham designated himself to be the “Projector of the Apostolic Faith Movement.” He established a headquarters, began holding services, and announced plans to open another Bible school.<sup>72</sup>

Farrow returned to Houston, sought out Seymour, explained Parham’s doctrine of baptism in the Holy Spirit, and related her own experience of speaking in tongues. Farrow suggested to Seymour that her congregation become part of Parham’s Apostolic Faith Movement. Initially, Seymour had doubts about Parham’s teaching: “Like many holiness people, Seymour believed that he had been baptized in the Spirit when he had been sanctified.”<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, Seymour decided to hear Parham for himself. He attended Parham’s meetings regularly with Farrow, and Parham’s teaching and Farrow’s testimony convinced Seymour:

Upon hearing Mrs. Farrow’s testimony and after hearing Parham preach, Seymour began to pray that God would empty him of any false notions he might hold. He searched the Scriptures, looking up texts that dealt with sanctification as well as texts dealing with baptism in the Spirit. He finally concluded that Parham’s position on baptism in the Holy Spirit with the Bible evidence of speaking in other tongues made sense as the best interpretation of the biblical facts.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Robeck, *Azusa Street*, 45.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

When Parham opened his Bible School in Houston, Farrow helped Seymour arrange to attend classes.

Charles Parham's wife, Sarah, described the school as "not a 'Theological Seminary' but a place that taught the great essential truths of God in the most practical manner to reach the sinner, the careless Christian, the backslider and all in need of the gospel message."<sup>75</sup> She noted,

As the Bible School was to be held but a short time, the students did not have time for any study but the Bible. They took the subjects of conviction, repentance, conversion, consecration, sanctification, healing, the Holy spirit in His different operations, prophecies, the book of Revelation and other practical subjects coming in for careful study in their due order. Everything that could be found in the Bible by the school on these subjects, was searched out, written down and discussed, and Mr. Parham gave a lesson each day in connection with these studies.<sup>76</sup>

Jim Crow segregation laws prevented Seymour from sitting in class with white students.

Instead, Parham allowed Seymour to sit in the hallway and listen to what was being taught in the classroom. Parham saw great ministry gifts and potential in Seymour.

Seymour, a humble man, "eagerly drank in the truths which were so new to him and food for his hungry soul."<sup>77</sup>

Parham hoped Seymour would take the Apostolic Faith ministry to Texas' African American population;<sup>78</sup> however, within a month after the school began, Julia Hutchins invited Seymour to pastor a holiness mission she founded in Los Angeles.

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<sup>75</sup> Sarah E. Parham, *The Life of Charles f. Parham* (1930; repr., New York: Garland, 1985), 137.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.



Hutchins was eager to go to Liberia as a missionary, and Neely Terry, a member of her congregation who heard Seymour preach during a visit she made to Houston in 1905, recommended Seymour.<sup>79</sup>

Seymour accepted Hutchins' invitation, much to Parham's disappointment. Seymour's planned departure frustrated Parham's plan for Seymour to spread the Apostolic Faith message in Texas. Seymour had not been baptized in the Holy Spirit; nevertheless, Seymour was determined to go. In spite of Parham's objections, Parham commissioned Seymour by having students of the Bible School lay hands on him and pray. Parham promised that he would send lapel buttons to Seymour that would identify Seymour and his workers as part of the Apostolic Faith movement.<sup>80</sup> Seymour departed Houston and arrived in Los Angeles in February 1906.<sup>81</sup>

Seymour arrived in Los Angeles after several years of groundwork for revival in the city. Prior to Seymour's arrival, many people in Los Angeles prayed for revival. News of the 1904 revival in Wales had reached Los Angeles and stirred the hearts of many believers including Frank Bartleman. Bartleman went to Los Angeles in December 1904, and bore a great burden of prayer for the city:

All this year the travail of soul was heavily upon me. In fact, for at least fifteen months, day and night, almost without intermission, the hand of the Lord was upon me to "bring forth." I had no rest day or night from these "groanings that could not be uttered." My precious wife believed that I would die. Days and

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<sup>79</sup> Robeck, *Azusa Street*, 50.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>81</sup> Gary McGee, "William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival," *Enrichment* 4, no.4 (Fall, 1999): 28.

nights I rolled on my bed in an agony of prayer for a lost world. I seemed almost as separate from my family as though I had been in a distant country for a year.<sup>82</sup>

Bartleman distributed tracts and conducted prayer meetings and revival meetings. His heart was deeply moved by the accounts he heard of the revival in Wales. He was among those who distributed literature about the revival: “G. Campbell Morgan’s little tract on the ‘Revival in Wales’ spread the fire in the churches wonderfully. I did a great deal of visiting among the saints also, and began to sell S. B. Shaw’s little book, ‘The Great Revival in Wales,’ among the churches. God wonderfully used it to promote faith for a revival spirit.”<sup>83</sup>

The 1904 Welsh revival also influenced Joseph Smale, pastor of the prestigious First Baptist Church in Los Angeles. He traveled to his British homeland in 1905 for a period of rest and recuperation from the demands of ministry. While there he developed a friendship with Evan Roberts, the leader of the revival in Wales.<sup>84</sup> Smale returned to Los

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<sup>82</sup> Cited in Lawrence, *The Apostolic Faith*, 71. Lawrence gives no source for his quotes of Bartleman’s, but they are part of a chapter that bears this note under the heading, “Bro. Frank Bartleman of Los Angeles, Cal., has kindly supplied us with the following valuable information about the beginning of the work in that city.” One cannot help but wonder how much of Bartleman’s travail of soul was fueled by displaced grief over the death of his oldest daughter in early 1905. It seems curious that his travail would make him feel distanced from his family during the very year of his daughter’s death.

<sup>83</sup> Frank Bartleman, *How Pentecost Came to Los Angeles*, in *Witness to Pentecost: The Life of Frank Bartleman*, ed. Donald W. Dayton (New York: Garland, 1985), 14.

<sup>84</sup> Concerning the significance of the Welsh Revival for Pentecostalism, Edith Blumhofer writes, “In several important ways, the revival contributed to the specific context from which Pentecostalism emerged. First, it directly challenged believers to obey the Holy Spirit. It modeled obedience in unusual ways, such as unstructured services with opportunity for all to express their spontaneous worship and conviction. Second, it was presented as an end-times Pentecost (the first showers of the latter rain), and it focused in practical ways on the Holy Spirit. Third, it helped make familiar the terms Pentecostals later found meaningful, and it gave those terms specific experiential attention. Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God*, 100.

Angeles intent upon leading his congregation into revival, and he held daily prayer

meetings in the church. Bartleman attended many of these meetings and described them:

These prayer meetings ran for a number of weeks, and there was much spontaneous worship, also some very wonderful healings. But the burden that gathered volume daily, and the cry, was for a “Pentecost” for Los Angeles, and for the world. “Pentecost” is the very word we all had on our lips, given by the Holy Ghost. Spiritual workers began to gather to this little company from all over the city. They came from many different denominations and missions. . . . Faith increased rapidly for extraordinary things.<sup>85</sup>

After fifteen weeks of daily, protracted prayer meetings, the church board issued Smale an ultimatum to desist from these protracted meetings and re-establish the status quo, or leave. After deliberation, and with the encouragement of some two hundred members from First Baptist Church, Smale resigned his position and organized a new church, the First New Testament Church, and held an organizational meeting on September 22, 1906. The position of the First New Testament Church regarding “The Pentecostal Blessing” presaged Seymour’s position:

We hold that it is the duty and privilege of the believer to know the Holy Spirit as “the promise of the Father” (Acts 1:4), elsewhere spoken of as “the Gift” (Acts 2:38), an experience distinct from regeneration. The disciples knew not the Holy Spirit as “the promise of the Father,” or in other words as “the Gift” until the day of Pentecost, therefore we speak of the Spirit as “The Pentecostal Blessing,” necessary to the believer’s sanctification, his knowledge of the fullness of God and his anointing for service.<sup>86</sup>

Smale taught that the failure to see the miraculous was because, over the centuries, the church had departed from the faith. He fully expected the spiritual gifts named in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 to be in evidence in his revived congregation.

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<sup>85</sup> Quoted in Lawrence, *The Apostolic Faith*, 71.

<sup>86</sup> Robeck, *Azusa Street*, 59.

The groundwork for revival was being laid elsewhere in Los Angeles as well.

Florence Crawford, a member of First Methodist Church in Los Angeles, reported that the young men in her church were holding all night prayer meetings. “This was an unprecedented activity in Los Angeles; to Crawford, it illustrated how deeply the city’s people were sensing their own spiritual need. ‘God was laying it on the hearts of the people to pray for the outpouring of the Spirit.’”<sup>87</sup> This was the climate of expectancy in Los Angeles when Seymour arrived.

When Seymour arrived in Los Angeles, he came with a variety of experiences to his credit. Cecil Robeck summarizes Seymour’s resume,

He had sat at the feet of a number of Wesleyan holiness teachers over the previous half dozen years—among them Martin Wells Knapp, Charles Price Jones, and Charles Fox Parham. He had held evangelistic meetings in Texas and Louisiana. He had provided interim leadership to a small congregation in Houston. He was now ready to begin his ministry in earnest. It was time to put into practice what he had learned at the feet of others.<sup>88</sup>

Events unfolded contrary to Seymour’s expectations. Seymour first preached at Hutchins’ church on February 24, 1906, and by March 4, she had come to the position that Seymour could not be allowed to continue to preach at the church because he taught about speaking in tongues as evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit. Seymour arrived at the church for the evening meeting on March 4, only to find that the doors were locked and Hutchins refused to allow him to enter. Shortly after this incident, Seymour was called to a specially convened meeting of the holiness association and was forbidden to preach his

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 62.

doctrine of the baptism in the Holy Spirit in the holiness church. This marked the end of Seymour's ministry at Hutchins' mission church.<sup>89</sup>

Seymour found church members Edward and Mattie Lee to be sympathetic to him. Edward Lee invited him to stay and hold Bible studies and prayer meetings in their home. Before long, the meetings grew too large for the Lees' home, and moved two blocks to the home of Richard and Ruth Asberry, at 214 (now 216) North Bonnie Brae Street. This was a season of intense spiritual hunger. Seymour described those days:

Prior to my meeting with Parham, the Lord had sanctified me from sin, and had led me into a deep life of prayer, assigning 5 hours out of the 24 every day for prayer. This prayer life I continued for 3 ½ years, when one day as I prayed the Holy Ghost said to me, "there are better things to be had in the spiritual life, but they must be sought out with faith and prayer.' This so quickened my soul that I increased my hours of prayer to 7 out of 24 and continued to pray on for 2 years longer, until the baptism fell on us.<sup>90</sup>

Five weeks after the meeting was moved to Bonnie Brae Street, Edward Lee was baptized in the Holy Spirit. He was the first in the group to speak in tongues. On April 9, Lee came home from work, complaining that he felt unwell. In the presence of Mattie Lee and, her (unnamed) brother, Seymour and Farrow prayed for Edward's physical recovery. Farrow determined it was the right time to pray for Lee to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. When they laid their hands on him and prayed for him, Lee fell to the floor and began to speak in tongues.<sup>91</sup> Lee's experience marked the beginning of a movement that would only grow in momentum.

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 63-64.

<sup>90</sup> G. A. Cook, *The Azusa Street Meeting* (Belvedere, CA: The Author, n.d.), quoted in Leonard Lovett, "William Seymour: Peril and Possibilities for a New Era," *Enrichment* 11, no. 2 (Spring 2006): 49.

<sup>91</sup> Robeck, *Azusa Street*, 67.

This group subsequently walked the two blocks to the Asberry home, where people gathered in anticipation of a meeting. During the meeting Seymour described what had happened to Edward Lee. Upon hearing the story, someone at the meeting began to speak in tongues. As Charles Shumway<sup>92</sup> reported, “The whole company was immediately swept to its knees as by some mighty power.”<sup>93</sup> By the end of the evening, several others had also spoken in tongues.<sup>94</sup>

News of what happened at the Asberrys’ home traveled fast. Their home became the center of attention for seekers and for the curious. Stanley Frodsham describes what proved to be the momentous beginnings of the Pentecostal movement that occurred at their home on that day in April:

It was on April 9, 1906, that the power of God fell upon those praying saints, and seven received the Baptism in the Spirit and began to speak in tongues. The shouts of praise were so tremendous that it was soon noised abroad that there was a gracious visitation from on high. Sister Emma Cotton writes: “People came from everywhere. By the next morning there was no getting near the house. As the people came they would fall under the power, and the whole city was stirred. The sick were healed and sinners were saved just as they came in.”<sup>95</sup>

Many people gathered, and the Asberrys’ front porch became an improvised platform from which to address the crowd. The porch finally collapsed under the weight of the

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<sup>92</sup> Charles Shumway was a Methodist minister who interviewed Seymour for a baccalaureate thesis he was writing for the University of Southern California.

<sup>93</sup> Robeck, *Azusa Street*, 68.

<sup>94</sup> William Seymour was baptized in the Holy Spirit on April 12.

<sup>95</sup> Frodsham, *With Signs Following*, 32. Emma Cotton was a leading African-American pastor in Los Angeles. She attended the Azusa Street revival in 1906.

swelling throng of people, and it became clear that this group needed a new place to meet.<sup>96</sup>

Before Good Friday, April 13, 1906, Seymour secured a lease with the First African Methodist Episcopal Church for their old facility located at 312 Azusa Street. The building was a two story, forty by sixty foot wood frame structure. The top floor had been the sanctuary for the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) congregation and the basement floor was used as a livery stable for worshipers' horses.

After the AME congregation moved out, the building became a target for arsonists who burned the roof completely and left the structure severely charred and water damaged. The AME church replaced the roof and proceeded with a renovation plan that added walls in the old sanctuary to make a series of rooms opening from a central hallway. The ground floor was used to store building equipment and lumber for the building project. The project was incomplete at the time Seymour and his group leased the building. The group set a goal to open services to the public on Easter Sunday. They began hauling away junk to clear space on the ground floor for a meeting place. They scattered straw and sawdust on the dirt floor, cleaned out spider webs, and washed windows. Pews were improvised by laying redwood planks across nail kegs and "by the end of the week . . . people had also brought an odd assortment of kitchen chairs, benches and backless stools."<sup>97</sup> A wooden crate covered with a piece of cotton cloth served as the

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<sup>96</sup> Robeck, *Azusa Street*, 69.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

pulpit. Some of the rooms upstairs housed Seymour and some of his associates. The remaining rooms were used for meetings and prayer.<sup>98</sup>

The Apostolic Faith Mission opened at 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles, and a revival ran continuously for three years from 1906 to 1909. This revival, named for the street on which the mission stood, became the birthplace of a worldwide Pentecostal phenomenon. Chapter 4 describes the Azusa Street revival and attempts to re-capture some of its sights, sounds, and passion.

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 73-74.



## CHAPTER 4

### HUMILITY AND THE AZUSA STREET REVIVAL

Chapter 4 describes the Pentecostal revival at the Apostolic Faith Mission, located at 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles. Firsthand descriptions and testimonies express what visitors to the Apostolic Faith Mission<sup>1</sup> experienced during the height of the revival in the years 1906 through 1908. There are many lenses through which to consider the Azusa Street revival. The participants at Azusa Street were passionate about many things including sanctification, baptism in the Holy spirit, divine healing, missions and the second coming of Christ; however, this chapter views the Azusa Street revival through the lens of humility and argues that humility is prerequisite to everything else that happened at Azusa Street.

This chapter sketches a biblical understanding of humility, and based on that understanding, it describes the Apostolic Faith Mission from two perspectives. First, the chapter considers the location and facilities and provides a description and theological understanding of their significance. The author of this paper believes that humility played a key theological role in how Azusa Street participants understood the significance of their physical environment. Second, the chapter describes the Azusa Street meetings

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter also refers to the Apostolic Faith Mission as the Azusa Street Mission, Azusa Street, or the Mission.

using humility as a key concept for understanding the central dynamic in the worship experience.

The primary resource in recapturing the Azusa Street experience will be the testimonies of those associated with the Apostolic Faith Mission.<sup>2</sup> No testimony can claim to recount events objectively because testimony recounts an individual's experience and how that individual remembers the experience. The testimonies used are favorable, and ascribe the events at Azusa Street to God.<sup>3</sup> For this chapter's purposes, two kinds of testimonies convey the passion, values, and points of view that provide an understanding of those who testified. The first testimonial material, published during the revival, is immediate and raw. Douglas Jacobsen writes, "When the Spirit fell on a Pentecostal mission or country tent-meeting, people found themselves thrown to the floor by a force so strong, yet so wonderful, that after the fact they could only stammer inadequate partial descriptions of what had happened to them."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Most of the testimonies are from individuals who attended the Apostolic Faith Mission during the revival. Some, however, are from people who did not attend, but whose testimonies were printed in *The Apostolic Faith*, the newspaper published by the Apostolic Faith Mission. The inclusion of the latter in the Mission's newspaper suggests that these testimonies were in harmony with the spirit of the Mission.

<sup>3</sup> Some thought otherwise. For a collection of articles critical of the Azusa Street revival see *Skeptics and Scoffers: The Religious World Looks at Azusa Street: 1906-1907*, vol. 8 of The Complete Azusa Street Library, ed. Larry Martin, (Pensacola, FL: Christian Life, 2004).

<sup>4</sup> Jacobsen, *Thinking in the Spirit*, 1. Some early Pentecostal perspectives have not stood the test of time, for example, the issue of believers taking medicine. An article in *The Apostolic Faith* called "Questions Answered" reads, "Do you teach that it is wrong to take medicine? Yes, for saints to take medicine. Medicine is for unbelievers, but the remedy for the saints of God we will find in Jas. 5:14, 'Is any sick among you, let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.'" *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 11 (October-January 1908). While some still hold to this position, it is not a mainstream Pentecostal view. The General Council of the Assemblies of God states, "Others have tried to set divine healing in opposition to or in competition

The other kind of testimonial material considered in the following pages was written by firsthand participants, such as Frank Bartleman,<sup>5</sup> some time after the events. This kind of testimony is valuable for this chapter's purposes because it conveys the ideals of those who recounted their experiences. A biblical understanding of humility will provide the lens through which to view the Azusa Street revival and the testimonies of the Azusa Street participants.

### A Biblical Concept of Humility

Humility is a quality of God-dependency rooted in and nourished by the character of God as revealed in Scripture. The Greek word ταπεινός and its cognates<sup>6</sup> serve as important keys to understanding the English word for humility. Ταπεινός means unpretentious<sup>7</sup> and signifies those of low social position, as in the Magnificat, where the ταπεινοί are the lowly as opposed to the mighty (Luke 1:52).<sup>8</sup> God's regard for the humble is reflected in the Magnificat. Mary understood herself to be a particular case in point. As the mother of Jesus, Mary rejoiced that God "looked with favor on the

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with the medical profession. This need not be so. Physicians through their skills have brought help to many." Assemblies of God, *Where We Stand* (Springfield, MO: Gospel, 1990), 53.

<sup>5</sup> Bartleman, "How Pentecost Came to Los Angeles."

<sup>6</sup> Other Greek word groups also translate into the English "humble" and its cognates. Other words include πραῦς and ἐπιείκεια and their cognates. The texts considered mainly use the ταπεινός word group. For a discussion of all these word groups as expressing humility, see H. H. Esser, "Humility," in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976), 256-2.

<sup>7</sup> See "ταπεινός" in *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick William Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 989.

<sup>8</sup> H. Giesen, "Tapeinos," in *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1993), 333.

lowliness [ταπεινῶσιν] of his servant” (Luke 1:48).<sup>9</sup> This understanding of the humble as the beneficiaries of God’s particular regard is based in the Old Testament. According to Psalm 138:6: “Though the LORD is high, he regards the lowly; but the haughty he perceives from far away.” God describes Himself through the prophet Isaiah as “the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with those who are contrite and humble in spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite” (Isa. 57:15).<sup>10</sup> The humble can be understood from two standpoints. From a human standpoint, the humble lack standing and influence in the world. From God’s standpoint, they enjoy divine favor and regard.

God favors the humble, and as the verses above suggest, God models humility in expressions of divine condescension. The holy God dwells with those who are contrite and humble. In the New Testament, God demonstrates humility in the ultimate act of condescension: the incarnation, ministry, and death of Jesus. Paul refers to Jesus’ life and death as an example of humility in Philippians 2:1-13. In verses 6-11 Paul describes Jesus,

[T]hough he was in the form of God, [he] did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the

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<sup>9</sup> All biblical quotes, unless otherwise noted, are from the New Revised Standard Version.

<sup>10</sup> The word translated “lowly” in Psalm 138:6 and “humble” in Isaiah 57:15 is נָפֶלֶט. This word is regularly translated by ταπεινός in the Septuagint, as is the case in Psalm 138:6.

earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.<sup>11</sup>

This passage highlights Jesus' humility in both its divine and human aspects. In its divine aspect Jesus, "who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped" (v.6).<sup>12</sup> Peter O'Brien comments, "Unlike many oriental despots the preexistent Christ, who already possessed equality with God, understood his position to mean 'giving' not 'getting', and thus he chose the path that led to incarnation and death."<sup>13</sup> Jesus expressed divine humility as condescension.

Jesus expressed the human aspect of humility in his obedience, "to the point of death," through crucifixion (v.8). Esser writes, "The meaning of self-humiliation is doubly defined in Jesus Christ. On the one hand, he became obedient unto death, even the uttermost shame of the cross. On the other hand, he had no other support than the incredible promise of the faithfulness of God."<sup>14</sup> This provides a picture of humble obedience rooted in trust in God.

Paul sets forth Jesus' humility as an example for the Philippian believers and urges upon them a humility that stands opposed to selfish ambition and conceit (v.3). This Christ-like humility calls for regarding others as better than oneself, and for looking

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<sup>11</sup> For this paper's purposes the question of whether this passage is a pre-Pauline hymn is irrelevant. The fact that it appears in this letter to the Philippians justifies this passage as Paul's description of Jesus, regardless of whether Paul created or adopted it.

<sup>12</sup> For a detailed discussion of possible interpretations of "in the form of God," see Peter T. O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1991), 206-11.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 206.

<sup>14</sup> Esser, "Humility," 262-63.

out for the interests of others (vv.3,4). This coincides with Jesus' description of himself as "gentle and humble in heart" (πραῦς . . . καὶ ταπεινὸς τῇ καρδίᾳ, Matt. 11:29).

According to Esser, "The two thoughts stand in parallel and show that Jesus was submissive before God, completely dependent on him, and devoted to him, and at the same time humble before men whose servant and helper he had become."<sup>15</sup>

The verses above demonstrate that humble people benefit from God's special regard. In Philippians 2, Paul describes Jesus' experience of God's blessing and faithfulness to the humble. Jesus, who humbled himself in obeying God even to the point of death, was not forsaken in his humility. On the contrary, in his humility Jesus experienced God's faithfulness and power. God "highly exalted him" (v.9).

James 4:6-8 and 1 Peter 5:5-6 reflect a similar theme of God's faithfulness to the humble.

James 4:6-8 states, "'God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.' Submit yourselves therefore to God. . . . Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you."

Similarly 1 Peter 5:5-6 asserts, "All of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for 'God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time."

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 262.

Karen Jobes, in her commentary on 1 Peter, states, “True humility . . . flows from recognizing one’s complete dependence on God and is expressed by the acceptance of one’s role and position in God’s economy.”<sup>16</sup>

Believers qualify themselves as participants in God’s purposes and recipients of God’s power when they exercise humility in the spirit of Jesus. Like Jesus, believers cooperate with God in actualizing God’s will among themselves by their humble obedience. Paul uses the example of Jesus to encourage the Philippians to work out their salvation because God is at work in them, enabling them both to will and to work for His good pleasure (Phil. 2:12,13). He calls them “to make that salvation fruitful in the here and now as the graces of Christ or the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) are produced in their lives.”<sup>17</sup>

The humble lack status among those who wield worldly power; nevertheless, they have unique status as recipients of God’s favor. God is awesome, and the humble properly find their place before God in a posture of reverence, submission, trust, and obedience. Humble people can be encouraged by God’s involvement with them because this awesome God associates with the lowly. The humble can live lives of costly allegiance to God because they know that God will vindicate them in the end. The next section describes the Azusa Street revival and demonstrates how the theme of humility shaped the ethos there.

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<sup>16</sup> Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005), 309.

<sup>17</sup> O’Brien, *Philippians*, 279.

### **The Facilities at the Apostolic Faith Mission**

Most people who attended the Apostolic Faith Mission at 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles arrived by streetcar.<sup>18</sup> The building was centrally located in the vicinity of a tombstone shop, stables, and a lumberyard.<sup>19</sup> This location proved ideal because in these non-residential surroundings neighbors would be undisturbed “by prayers or shouts going up sometimes all night.”<sup>20</sup>

The location and physical description of the Apostolic Faith Mission reflect the theme of humility. G. F. Taylor, an early Pentecostal leader, describes the humble nature of the facilities:

The center of this work is an old wooden Methodist church, marked for sale, partly burned out, recovered by a flat roof and made into two flats by a floor. It is unplastered, simply whitewashed on the rough boarding. Up stairs is a long room, furnished with chairs and three California redwood planks, laid end to end on backless chairs. This is the Pentecostal ‘upper room,’ where sanctified souls seek Pentecostal fullness. . . . There are smaller rooms where hands are laid on the sick and ‘they recover’ as of old. Below is a room 40x60 feet, filled with odds and ends of chairs, benches, and backless seats. . . . In the center of the big room is a box on the end, covered with cotton, which a junk man would value at about 15 cents. This is the pulpit from which is sounded forth what the leader, Brother Seymour, calls old-time repentance, old-time pardon, old-time sanctification, old-time power over devils and diseases, and the old-time “Baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Stanley M. Horton, “A Typical Day at the Azusa Street Mission,” 1982; repr, *Enrichment* 4, no. 4 (Fall 1999): 34.

<sup>19</sup> Frodsham, *With Signs Following*, 33.

<sup>20</sup> *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 6 (February-March 1907): 2, col. 1.

<sup>21</sup> G. F. Taylor, “The Spirit and the Bride,” in *Three Early Pentecostal Tracts*, ed. Donald W. Dayton (New York: Garland, 1985), 94.



The Azusa Street participants viewed the humble facilities as a point of identification with Jesus rather than a point of shame. In reference to the facilities, an article in the September 1906 issue of *The Apostolic Faith*<sup>22</sup> draws on the account in John 1:46 where Nathaniel makes the disparaging remark about Jesus being from Nazareth. Nathaniel exclaims, “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” According to the article, The Apostolic Faith Mission “is the Nazareth of Los Angeles. Some have come from long distances to this spot, directed of the Lord, and the humble have always been greatly blessed.”<sup>23</sup> This accords with a biblical understanding of humility. Jesus’ association with Nazareth makes him one of the humble, lacking standing and influence from a worldly point of view.<sup>24</sup> Yet, the Spirit descended upon him (John 1:32). Similarly, this Apostolic Faith Mission, though leaving much to be desired from a worldly point of view, received God’s favor, and the Spirit descended on it. The article explicitly emphasizes humility and says those greatly blessed at Azusa were the humble.

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<sup>22</sup> The newspaper published by the Azusa Street Mission.

<sup>23</sup> *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 1 (September 1906): 3, col. 2.

<sup>24</sup> Rudolph Schnackenburg writes, “Nathanael . . . objects to the Messiah having so lowly an origin, as do the Jews, 6:42. . . . It will be shown in the case of Nathanael that only faith overcomes all objections and recognizes the divine origin of Jesus in spite of his earthly lowliness.” Rudolph Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, vol. 1 (New York: The Seabury Press, 1980), 315. Similarly D. A. Carson writes, “From John’s perspective, the fact that Jesus was reared in Nazareth not only obscured his origins in Bethlehem for those who did not search very far (7:41-42, 52), but also reflected the self-abasement of the man from heaven. He was known as ‘Jesus of Nazareth’ or ‘Jesus the Nazarene’ (cf. Mt. 2:23), not ‘Jesus the Bethlehemite’, with all the royal, Davidic overtones that would have provided. Some years later, Christians could be contemptuously dismissed as the ‘Nazarene sect’ (Acts 24:5).” D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1991), 160.

Another issue of *The Apostolic Faith* states, “It was God’s eternal purpose that Jesus should be born in a humble place. No place is too humble for Jesus to dwell in. He poured out His Spirit in the humblest meeting place in Los Angeles, that no flesh should glory in his presence.”<sup>25</sup> No place is too humble a dwelling for Jesus because Jesus became incarnate from the condescending God and dwells with the contrite and humble. God imparted divine favor and imparted the Holy Spirit to those who met in this humble location.

A witness of those early days writes, “Travelers from afar wend their way to the headquarters at Azusa Street. There they find a two-story whitewashed store building. You would hardly expect heavenly visitations there unless you remember the stable at Bethlehem.”<sup>26</sup> Frank Bartleman saw significance in both the location and the low rafters in the building’s design as signposts of the humility that was so crucial to the revival:

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.<sup>27</sup>

The people at the Apostolic Faith Mission worshiped God in humble circumstances.

The humble circumstances of the Azusa Street Mission proved effective in promoting multi-ethnic participation. Early Pentecostal historian Stanley Frodsham quotes a leading Methodist layperson as saying, “I bless God that it [the revival] did not

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<sup>25</sup> *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 4 (December 1906): 1, col. 4.

<sup>26</sup> Frodsham, *With Signs Following*, 33.

<sup>27</sup> Bartleman, *How Pentecost Came*, 59.

start in any church in this city, but in a barn, so that we might all come and take part in it. If it had been started in a fine church, poor colored people and Spanish people would not have got it.”<sup>28</sup> Interracial and multi-ethnic participation marked the early days of the Azusa Street revival. In September 1906 *The Apostolic Faith* reported,

The work began among the colored people. God baptized several sanctified wash women with the Holy Ghost, who have been much used of Him. The first white woman to receive the Pentecost and gift of tongues in Los Angeles was Mrs. Evans who is now in the work in Oakland. Since then multitudes have come. God makes no difference in nationality, Ethiopians, Chinese, Indians, Mexicans, and other nationalities worship together.<sup>29</sup>

Frank Bartleman visited Azusa Street and later commented, “The ‘color line’ was washed away in the blood.”<sup>30</sup> The great diversity of people present at Azusa Street also included people with some status or position in life. When B. F. Lawrence visited the Mission, he reported,

One thing that somewhat surprised me at that first meeting I attended, and also subsequently, was the presence of so many persons from the different churches, not a few of them educated and refined. Some were pastors, evangelists, foreign missionaries, and others of high position in various circles, looking on with seeming amazement and evident interest and profit. And they took part in the services in one way or another. Persons of many nationalities were also present, of which Los Angeles seems to be filled, representing all manner of religious beliefs.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Frodsham, *With Signs Following*, 34-35.

<sup>29</sup> *The Apostolic Faith*, 3, col. 2.

<sup>30</sup> Bartleman, *How Pentecost Came*, 54. Unfortunately, the racial unity of the early Pentecostal movement was short-lived.

<sup>31</sup> B. F. Lawrence, “The Apostolic Faith Restored,” 78.

Although a humble facility, the Azusa Street Mission enjoyed God's presence and blessing. As in the biblical sketch of humility, the humble benefit from God's special regard. They have a unique status as recipients of God's favor. God's favor served in part as a magnetic pull, drawing people to the Mission. According to Bartleman,

God was working mightily. It seemed that every one had to go to "Azusa." Missionaries were gathered there from Africa, India, and the islands of the sea. Preachers and workers had crossed the continent, and come from distant islands, with an irresistible drawing to Los Angeles. . . . They had come up for "Pentecost," though they little realized it. It was God's call.<sup>32</sup>

Some testified that they experienced God's awesome presence even before arriving at the building. Bartleman writes, "A very 'dead line' seemed to be drawn around 'Azusa Mission,' by the Spirit. When men came within two or three blocks of the place they were seized with conviction."<sup>33</sup> In fact, one visitor stated that even before his train entered the city he felt the power of the revival.<sup>34</sup> Bartleman remarks, "I have stopped more than once within two blocks of the place and prayed for strength before I dared to go on. The presence of the Lord was so real."<sup>35</sup>

God favored this humble worship setting with an overwhelming sense of divine presence. Inside the Azusa Street Mission building "there was a presence of God with us,

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<sup>32</sup> Bartleman, *How Pentecost Came*, 54.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 53. There were, however, scoffers and skeptics at the meetings. Perhaps they have come near the premises without being seized with conviction because, from the perspective of the Pentecostals, it was the humble who were richly blessed. The Pentecostals would attribute the absence of conviction among scoffers to a lack of humility. There are testimonies of scoffers being converted in the meetings. This is an unresolved tension in the Pentecostal testimony.

<sup>34</sup> Frodsham, *With Signs Following*, 33.

<sup>35</sup> Bartleman, *How Pentecost Came*, 60.

through prayer, we could depend on.”<sup>36</sup> Bartleman describes that presence as “the very atmosphere of heaven.”<sup>37</sup> In that place “the hearts of the people, both in act and motive, were searched to the very bottom. It was no joke to become one of that company. No man ‘durst join himself to them’ except he meant business, to go through.”<sup>38</sup> Louis Osterberg testified about his visit to Azusa Street,

From the first time I entered I was struck by the blessed spirit that prevailed in the meeting, such a feeling of unity and humility among the children of God. And before the meeting was over, I was fully satisfied and convinced that it was the mighty power of God that was working. From that time on I hungered more and more and felt that I could not be fully satisfied until the blessings of the Pentecostal life were mine.<sup>39</sup>

Osterberg’s remarks suggest God’s powerful presence. The humble sensed God’s presence at Azusa Street.<sup>40</sup>

The inside of the building was also humble. Robert E. Webber notes, “The space of worship communicates something about the convictions of the people who worship there.”<sup>41</sup> The interior layout of the Azusa Street Mission reflected the convictions of the people who worshiped there. Makeshift pews consisted of planks laid across nail kegs

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 55. The scripture quote by Bartleman is from Acts 5:13, King James Version.

<sup>39</sup> *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 7 (April 1907): 4, col. 4.

<sup>40</sup> The leaders of the Apostolic Faith Mission recognized that experiences varied among participants at the revival. *The Apostolic Faith* states, “In the meetings, it is noticeable that while some in the rear are opposing and arguing, others are at the altar falling down under the power of God and feasting on the good things of God. The two spirits are always manifest, but no opposition can kill, no power in earth or hell can stop God’s work, while He has consecrated instruments through which to work.” *The Apostolic Faith*, 1, col. 4.

<sup>41</sup> Robert E. Webber, *Worship Old and New* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 137.

arranged in a square and facing inward.<sup>42</sup> An odd assortment of chairs added to the seating. In the middle stood a makeshift pulpit, consisting of two old shoe crates, one on top of the other and covered with a cloth. A simple altar consisted of a plank on two chairs in the center of the room.<sup>43</sup>

In the early days, the pulpit simply stood on the floor rather than on a platform. The arrangement of the pews and chairs emphasized the corporate, participatory nature of worship at the Mission and lacking a front to which worshipers looked, the arrangement militated against any sense of hierarchy.<sup>44</sup> The placement of the pulpit at the level of the people reinforced the equality of the participants. Bartleman comments,

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. All were on a level. The ministers were servants, according to the true meaning of the word. We did not honor men for their advantage, in means or education, but rather for their God-given “gifts.”<sup>45</sup>

Seymour’s use of the pulpit reinforced its humble placement among the people. Though Seymour preached at the Mission, he generally sat behind the makeshift pulpit

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<sup>42</sup> Bartleman, *How Pentecost Came*, 48.

<sup>43</sup> Taylor, “The Spirit and the Bride,” 94.

<sup>44</sup> Even the authority of those recognized as divinely appointed was reluctantly acknowledged. Frank Bartleman said that William Seymour, the pastor of the Apostolic Faith Mission “was recognized as the nominal leader in charge.” Bartleman, *How Pentecost Came*, 58.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

with his head inside the top crate, and prayed. In the context of commenting on

Seymour's practice, Bartleman states, "There was no pride there."<sup>46</sup>

Glenn Cook, the business manager for the Azusa Mission, provides a picture of the humble Seymour as we might have encountered him in an actual meeting:

I never have met a man who had such control over his spirit. The Scripture that reads "Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them," was literally fulfilled in this man. No amount of confusion and accusation seemed to disturb him. He would sit behind that packing case and smile at us until we were all condemned by our own activities . . . It was the wonderful character of the man whom God had chosen that attracted the people to keep coming to this humble meeting.<sup>47</sup>

Others attested to William Seymour's humility. William Durham said of Seymour, "He is the meekest man I ever met. He walks and talks with God. His power is in his weakness. He seems to maintain a helpless dependence on God and is as simple-hearted as a little child, and at the same time is so filled with God that you feel the love and power every time you get near him."<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Cook, *The Azusa Street Meeting*, quoted in Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel*, 194-195. The scripture quote is from the King James Version. Charles Parham did not extol Seymour as a humble person. Sarah Parham, in her account of her husband Charles' life and ministry, wrote, "W. J. Seymour, in his first paper gave a true account of the origin of the work, but after he failed to receive the message Mr. Parham brought, he was possessed with a spirit of leadership and sought to prove that Azusa St. Mission was where the baptism of the Holy Spirit first fell. Mr. Parham went to him and pled with him to repent to God and man for trying to deceive the people, and reject leadership and exalting of self or God would humble him." Parham, *Charles F. Parham*, 164. Parham had a falling out with William Seymour during a visit to the Azusa Street Mission. Parham criticized many aspects of the Azusa Street Revival and was particularly scandalized by the interracial character of the meetings. It was quickly made known to Parham that he was not welcome there. See Robeck, *Azusa Street*, 140-41 and Parham, *Charles F. Parham*, 163. In contrast to Parham, the notable Pentecostal leader John G. Lake said of Seymour, "I do not believe that any man in modern times had a more wonderful deluge of God in his life than God gave that dear fellow." Synan, "The Lasting Legacies, 145.

<sup>48</sup> *The Apostolic Faith*, 4, col. 3.

Another individual who met Seymour, A. S. Worrell, commented, “Brother Seymour has more power with God, and more power from God, than all his critics in and out of the city. He strength is in his conscious weakness, and lowliness before God; and, so long as he maintains this attitude, the power of God will, no doubt, continue to flow through him.”<sup>49</sup> Both testimonies link the power of God in Seymour’s ministry with Seymour’s evident humility. This again accords with the biblical notion that God bestows favor on the humble.

God used Seymour, a humble man, in a revival that occurred in the humblest of circumstances. Robeck summarizes the stark conditions, and some of the challenges those conditions presented:

The building in which they met was “tucked away” in a transitional neighborhood. It was nothing to look at—little more than a poorly whitewashed, burned-out shell with makeshift essentials . . . Because it lacked insulation and air conditioning, and its ground floor was built of rough-sawn studs with only the outside lumber as walls, during the summer months the building grew intensely hot. With so many perspiring bodies jammed together in such close quarters, the air became so foul at times that, as one reporter sniffed, it was “necessary to stick one’s nose under the benches to get a breath of fresh air.” At least one visitor insisted that the health department close the mission down because its lack of ventilation was a “violation of the sanitary laws.”<sup>50</sup>

A plague of flies afflicted the worshipers in the summer of 1906. Robeck writes, “One reporter painted this graphic picture: ‘The temple of the Holy rollers was a stable not so long ago, and the big lazy flies, separated from the friendly horses, still haunt its dim recesses in a disconsolate sort of way and alight sickly on neck and faces, refusing to

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<sup>49</sup> *The Apostolic Faith*, 5, col. 4.

<sup>50</sup> Robeck, *Azusa Street*, 129-30.



budge until they are rudely slapped off.”<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, the people came. Robeck concludes, “In spite of all these problems—the substandard facilities, intense heat, lack of ventilation, and swarms of flies—people came by the thousands. Many of them came because they believed that God was doing something new in that place and they wanted to be a part of it.”<sup>52</sup>

### **The Meetings at the Apostolic Faith Mission**

The Azusa Street Mission enjoyed constant activity for three years, beginning with the inception of the revival in April 1906. Meetings typically ran from ten in the morning until twelve at night.<sup>53</sup> One man who attended the Mission gives a general sense of the daily flow of events:

There was a large auditorium with an “Upper Room,” upstairs. The place was open day and night for several years, with preaching services two or three times daily, and people in prayer in the Upper Room day and night. At the close of the preaching, crowds would retire to the Upper Room to pray. When time came for preaching, someone would ring a bell and all would come downstairs for the services.<sup>54</sup>

A. W. Orwig recounts his visit,

I arrived at ten o’clock, and at that early hour found the house practically full, with many more coming later, some glad to secure standing room. I remained until one o’clock, returned at two and stayed until five, thus spending six solid

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 3 (November 1906): 1, col. 1.

<sup>54</sup> Harvey McAlister, “They Speak with Other Tongues,” *Enrichment* 11, no. 2 (Spring 2006): 148. These are the words of Robert E. McAlister as related by his brother Harvey. Both attended meetings at the Azusa Street Mission.

hours on that one day. And I was more than ever persuaded that the movement was of God.<sup>55</sup>

Evidently it was easy to lose track of time, even when conditions there were less than ideal. According to *The Apostolic Faith* newspaper,

[D]uring the hot days when the crowds would fill Azusa Mission all day, people would often get up and say they praised God for what he was doing for them “this morning;” not realizing that the sun was going down in the evening. They had not eaten all day and yet they were so taken up with sitting at the feet of Jesus that they lost track of the time and would sit there in the heat, wiping the perspiration from their faces.<sup>56</sup>

The April 1907 issue of *The Apostolic Faith* relates the events that took place in a service on the evening of May 1.<sup>57</sup> It describes a series of testimonies intermixed with singing, which occurred “after some hearty singing and earnest prayer.”<sup>58</sup> The earnest prayer began as the people arrived. When they first gathered, the people sought God individually. From that disposition of individual seeking, a corporate experience of worship emerged:

When we first reached the meeting we avoided as much as possible human contact and greeting. We wanted to meet God first. We got our head under some bench in the corner in prayer, and met men only in the Spirit, knowing them “after the flesh” no more. The meetings started themselves, spontaneously, in testimony, praise and worship.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Lawrence, *The Apostolic Faith*, 77. Lawrence does not cite a source for this quotation. The quotation appears in a section with a heading that states, “We are indebted to Bro. A. W. Orwig for the following account of the Azusa St. work.”

<sup>56</sup> *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 8 (May 1907): 1, col. 1.

<sup>57</sup> One can only assume that a publishing lag accounts for the inclusion of events that occurred on May 1 in a paper dated April.

<sup>58</sup> *The Apostolic Faith*, 2, col. 2.

<sup>59</sup> Bartleman, *How Pentecost Came*, 59.

Regarding the testimonies, *The Apostolic Faith* notes, “The testimony meetings which precede the preaching often continue for two hours or more and people are standing waiting to testify all the time.”<sup>60</sup> During that time “a dozen might be on their feet at one time, trembling under the mighty power of God.”<sup>61</sup> Their testimonies were “real testimonies, from fresh heart-experience.”<sup>62</sup> The songs intermixed with the testimonies were sung from memory, without the benefit of musical accompaniment. The most commonly sung hymn was “The Comforter Has Come.”<sup>63</sup> Other favorites included: “Heavenly Sunlight,” “Under the Blood,” “Fill Me Now,” “Joy Unspeakable,” “Love Lifted Me,” “The Power,” and “Jesus Is Coming.”<sup>64</sup>

*The Apostolic Faith* said the singing at Azusa Street was, “characterized by freedom.”<sup>65</sup> This indicates two things. First, people initiated singing as they felt moved by God rather than being led by appointed leaders. A second aspect of freedom related to the experience of singing under the direct influence of the Holy Spirit. Often “one will

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<sup>60</sup> *The Apostolic Faith*, 1, col. 1.

<sup>61</sup> Bartleman, *How Pentecost Came*, 59.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Bartleman reports, “In the beginning in ‘Azusa’ we had no musical instruments. In fact we felt no need of them. There was no place for them in our worship. All was spontaneous. We did not even sing from hymn books. All the old, well known hymns were sung from memory, quickened by the Spirit of God. ‘The Comforter Has Come,’ was possibly the one most sung. We sang it from fresh, powerful heart experience. Oh, how the power of God filled and thrilled us.” Bartleman, *How Pentecost Came*, 57.

<sup>64</sup> Glenn Gohr, “The Azusa Street Revival: Interesting and Unusual Facts,” *Enrichment* 11, no. 2 (Spring 2006): 9.

<sup>65</sup> *The Apostolic Faith*, 1, col. 2.

rise and sing a familiar song in a new tongue.”<sup>66</sup> Spirit-inspired corporate singing described as heavenly singing occurred. *The Apostolic Faith* reports, “No instruments of music are used, none are needed. No choir—but bands of angels have been heard by some in the spirit and there is a heavenly singing that is inspired by the Holy Ghost.”<sup>67</sup>

Lawrence found this Spirit-inspired singing particularly moving:

Especially did the enchanting strains of the so-called “Heavenly Choir” or hymns sung under the evident *direction* of the Holy Spirit both as to words and tune, thrill my whole being. It was not a something that could be repeated at will, but supernaturally given for each special occasion and was one of the most indisputable evidences of the presence of the power of God. Perhaps nothing so greatly impressed people as this singing; at once inspiring a holy awe, or a feeling of indescribable wonder, especially if the hearers were in devout attitude.<sup>68</sup>

Preaching followed the protracted time of testimonies and singing. One might well hear William Seymour preach, although participants remained open to any whom God might use: “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 of the Spirit. We wanted to hear from God, through whomever he might speak.”<sup>69</sup> God might use a man, a woman, or a child. One observer notes, “No instrument that God can use is rejected on account of color or dress or lack of education.”<sup>70</sup> Bartleman states, “The Lord was liable to burst through any one.”<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., col. 1.

<sup>68</sup> Lawrence, *The Apostolic Faith*, 79-80.

<sup>69</sup> Bartleman, *How Pentecost Came*, 58.

<sup>70</sup> Frodsham, *With Signs Following*, 34.

When Seymour did preach, he was not an impressive orator. Lawrence said that the preaching at Azusa Street was not great, humanly speaking.<sup>72</sup> Osterberg describes Seymour as “meek and plain spoken and no orator. He spoke the common language of the uneducated class. He might preach for three-quarters of an hour with no more emotionalism than that there post. He was no arm waving thunderer by any stretch of the imagination.”<sup>73</sup> Ernest Williams concurred: “The preaching was so simple it could hardly be called preaching.”<sup>74</sup>

An unusual manifestation of God’s presence and power made the meetings powerful. One witness reports, “There is such power in the preaching of the Word in the Spirit that people are shaken on the benches.”<sup>75</sup> Orwig said that the testimonies, prayers, and songs “were usually attended with divine unction to such a degree as to move and melt hearts in every direction.”<sup>76</sup> As a result,

The altar of prayer was generally crowded and other space designated for seekers, both saint and sinner. Many of both classes who came out of curiosity, and some possibly to ridicule, were smitten to the floor by the power of God, and often wrestled in agony and prayer until they found that for which they sought,—some for pardon and others for deeper experience in God, by whatever name the latter might be called.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Bartleman, *How Pentecost Came*, 59.

<sup>72</sup> Lawrence, *The Apostolic Faith*, 80.

<sup>73</sup> Synan, “Lasting Legacies,” 145.

<sup>74</sup> Ernest S. Williams, “Memories of Azusa Street Mission,” *The Pentecostal Evangel*, April 1966,

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<sup>75</sup> Frodsham, *With Signs Following*, 34.

<sup>76</sup> Lawrence, *The Apostolic Faith*, 78.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

During those times, “Often the hardness of heart, the levity, of [sinners] were completely overcome by the burning truth of God, and men and women were gloriously swept into the kingdom of grace with whirlwind power.”<sup>78</sup> Bartleman states,

Some one 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 enmasse, 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.<sup>79</sup>

Orwig said “mighty prayer, faith, singleness of eye and truly anointed speech were used of God for the salvation of souls, the edification of believers, and the receiving of the Holy Spirit with various manifestations.”<sup>80</sup> Bartleman concurred, “The whole place was steeped in prayer. God was in His holy temple.”<sup>81</sup>

The Holy Spirit convicted people through prophetic utterances as well as through preaching. R. J. Scott attested, “I have attended those meetings for nearly three months, and during that time there has been scarcely a day that something has not happened through interpretation of tongues or someone being present who understood what had been said, which brought conviction on someone and started them to seeking God.”<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>79</sup> Bartleman, *How Pentecost Came*, 60.

<sup>80</sup> Lawrence, *The Apostolic Faith*, 80.

<sup>81</sup> Bartleman, *How Pentecost Came*, 60.

<sup>82</sup> *The Apostolic Faith*, 7, col. 4.

B. F. Lawrence recounts, “Occasionally some foreigner . . . would hear a testimony or earnest exhortation in his native tongue from a person not at all acquainted with that language; thereby be pungently convicted that it was a call from God to repent of sin.”<sup>83</sup>

The Holy Spirit sometimes empowered children to deliver a convincing interpretation of tongues or prophecy. The testimony of Mack E. Jonas is typical of such cases. Jonas recounts, “I went to Azusa Mission to make fun, but a little girl about eight years old got up and testified to the saving power of Jesus, and while she spoke, the Holy Ghost convicted me of my sins. I went to the altar and cried out to the Lord to save me from sin. Now I can witness His saving power.”<sup>84</sup>

Heavenly qualifications, not earthly qualifications, counted in the eyes of the participants at Azusa Street.<sup>85</sup> “Someone would finally get up anointed for the message. . . It might be a child, a woman, or a man. . . . It made no difference. We rejoiced that God was working.”<sup>86</sup>

The theme of humility factors prominently into Bartleman’s account of God’s work in the lives of people who attended meetings at Azusa Street. In those meetings the Lord’s presence humbled participants. Bartleman writes,

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<sup>83</sup> Lawrence, *The Apostolic Faith*, 79. For vivid testimonials to this effect see Lawrence, *The Apostolic Faith*, 82-83 and McAlister, “They Speak with Other Tongues.”

<sup>84</sup> *The Apostolic Faith*, 8, col. 1 and *The Apostolic Faith*, 2, col. 3.

<sup>85</sup> Bartleman writes, “We did not honor men for their advantage, in means or education, but rather for their God-given ‘gifts.’” Bartleman, *How Pentecost Came*, 58.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

The rich and educated were the same as the poor and ignorant, and found a much harder death to die. . . . All were equal. No flesh might glory in His presence. He could not use the self-opinionated. . . . 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 fodder was thus placed for the lambs, not for giraffes. All could reach it.<sup>87</sup>

He describes an “atmosphere of God”<sup>88</sup> in which, “It seemed a fearful thing to hinder or grieve the Spirit.”<sup>89</sup> Sometimes individuals tried to promote themselves in the meetings, and Bartleman reports that was short-lived:

Presumptuous men would sometimes come among us. Especially preachers who would try to spread themselves, in self-opinionation. But their effort was short lived. The breath would be taken from them. Their minds would wander, their brains reel. Things would turn black before their eyes. They could not go on. I never saw one get by with it in those days. They were up against God. No one cut them off. We simply prayed. The Holy Spirit did the rest. . . . He wound them up on short order. They were carried out dead, spiritually speaking. They generally bit the dust in humility, going through the process we had all gone through. In other words they died out, came to see themselves in all their weakness, then in childlike humility and confession were taken up of God, transformed through the mighty “baptism” in the Spirit. The “old man” died with all his pride, arrogance and good works.<sup>90</sup>

It was not just the proud who had this experience. Bartleman says “even very good men came to abhor themselves in the clearer light of God”<sup>91</sup> because,

Men’s hearts are being searched as with a lighted candle. It is a tremendous sifting time, not only of actions, but of inner, secret motives. Nothing can escape the all-searching eye of God. Jesus is being lifted up, the ‘blood’ magnified, ‘slaying power’ manifest. . . . God is with us in great earnestness.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 58-59.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 64.



In that atmosphere, “God took strong men and women to pieces, and put them together again, for His glory in a tremendous overhauling process. Pride, self-assertion, self-importance, and self-esteem could not survive there. The religious ego preached its own funeral sermon quickly.”<sup>93</sup> Taylor provides similar testimony:

Proud preachers and laymen with great heads, filled and inflated with all kinds of theories and beliefs, have come here from all parts, have humbled themselves . . . and have thrown away their notions, and have wept in conscious emptiness before God and begged to be “endued with power from on high,” and every honest believer has received the wonderful incoming of the Holy Spirit to fill and thrill and melt and energise [*sic*] his physical frame and faculties, and the Spirit has witnessed to His presence by using the vocal organs in the speaking forth of a “new tongue.”<sup>94</sup>

A brief consideration of activities upstairs, above the general meeting room, completes the picture of the events at the Apostolic Faith Mission. Those seeking healing used a prayer room, while another large room served as the venue for morning prayer, Bible study, and the place where people sought baptism in the Holy Spirit.<sup>95</sup> One visitor described this room as “a long room furnished with chairs and three California redwood planks, laid end to end on backless chairs. This is the Pentecostal upper room where sanctified souls seek Pentecostal fullness and go out speaking in new tongues.”<sup>96</sup>

Bartleman describes the activities of the Holy Spirit in that room in his characteristically colorful style:

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>94</sup> Taylor, “The Spirit and the Bride,” 94.

<sup>95</sup> *The Apostolic Faith*, 2, col. 3.

<sup>96</sup> *The Apostolic Faith*, 1, col. 2.

We had a “tarrying” room upstairs, for those especially seeking God for the “baptism,” though many got it in the main assembly room also. . . . On the wall of the tarrying room was hung a placard with the words, “No talking above a whisper.” We knew nothing of “jazzing” them through at that time. The Spirit wrought very deeply. An unquiet spirit, or a thoughtless talker, was immediately reproved by the Spirit. We were on “holy ground.” This atmosphere was unbearable to the carnal spirit. They generally gave this room a wide berth unless they had been thoroughly subdued and burned out. Only honest seekers sought it, those who really meant business with God. It was no . . . place to throw fits, or blow off steam in. Men did not “fly to their lungs” in those days. They flew to the mercy seat. They took their shoes off, figuratively speaking. They were on “holy ground.”<sup>97</sup>

God ignited a revival at Azusa Street that resulted in the global spread of Pentecostalism. Participants held a strong belief in the practice of speaking in tongues, yet at the heart of the revival God humbled human hearts. One person, after visiting for the first time, commented, “The thing that impressed me most was the humility of the people, and I went to my room and got down on my knees and asked God to give me humility.”<sup>98</sup>

Humility is essential to receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Humility is also essential for carrying out ministry in the Spirit’s power. The reason is that God operates on a level different from humans:

Oh how we praise the Lord for the way He works; when we go to do a work for Him He will work another by His Spirit through us. He wants to teach us that His ways are not our ways nor His thoughts our thoughts, but as the heaven is high above the earth so are His ways higher than our ways and His thoughts than our thoughts.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Bartleman, *How Pentecost Came*, 55.

<sup>98</sup> *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 5 (January 1907): 1, col. 1.

<sup>99</sup> *The Apostolic Faith*, 2, col. 1.

Therefore, God must be sought. The Pentecostal experience demands humility expressed in setting aside other agendas in order to invest time seeking God. “O let us trust Him and yield to Him. Let us wait very earnestly upon Him. Take time to wait on God and pray. If we all keep low down at the feet of Jesus and give Him all the honor and glory, all the power and signs of Pentecost will be restored.”<sup>100</sup>

Clara Lum, a pioneer of the Pentecostal movement at Azusa Street, testified, “I was filled with the Holy Ghost many times and was shaken many times by the power of God. But when I became a little child, clay in His hands, He baptized me with the Holy Ghost.”<sup>101</sup> The same was true for Brother Rosa, who was baptized in the Holy Spirit in a meeting in Oklahoma led by a Reverend Evans and his wife, and an Azusa Street leader named Florence Crawford:

The second day that I went to the meeting, the Lord put a real hunger in my soul to go forward, but I was too proud as a minister of the Gospel to humble myself in a lowly mission and let ladies pray over me for the gift of the Holy Ghost, and I had in my mind what people would think of me. But the third day, as I arose to testify in the audience, the only words I could say were: “What does God think of me?” Then I could only weep for some minutes and the power of God came upon me until I dropped to the floor. I was under the power of God for almost an hour and a half, and it was there that all pride, and self, and conceit disappeared, and I was really dead to the world, for I had Christ within in His fullness. I was baptized with the Holy Ghost and spoke in a new tongue.<sup>102</sup>

If seeking the baptism of the Holy Spirit requires humility, receiving the Holy Spirit also results in humility. *The Apostolic Faith* states, “The more of the Holy Ghost

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<sup>100</sup> *The Apostolic Faith*, 3, col. 5.

<sup>101</sup> *The Apostolic Faith*, 8, col. 1.

<sup>102</sup> *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 2 (October 1906): 1, col. 3.

you have, the more love, the more humility, the more praises.”<sup>103</sup> A humble position is the best possible position one can be in: “It is a blessed place at the feet of Jesus, looking up into the Master’s face. Mary found her place at His feet. She did not seek to touch His head or His shoulders, but was content with a place at His feet looking up into His face. . . . Our highest place is low at His feet.”<sup>104</sup>

The revival participants understood humility to be the prerequisite for continued usefulness to God. A daily discipline of humility was proposed for Pentecostal believers: “You who are baptized with the Holy Ghost must die daily that Christ may abide in you. If we begin to get puffed up, God will set us aside, but if we give Him all the glory, He will use us to scatter this light.”<sup>105</sup> *The Apostolic Faith* reports instances in which people requested prayer that God would keep them humble.<sup>106</sup> Lawrence, based on 1 Corinthians 1:26-29, exhorted his readers, “If you have pride, place, reputation, forsake them and become one of the instruments of God’s choice.”<sup>107</sup> The September 1907 issue of *The Apostolic Faith* summarizes the importance of humility simply: “We must keep where God can use us, and the secret is humility, the Word and the Blood.”<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> *The Apostolic Faith*, 1, col. 3.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 3, col. 5.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, col. 1.

<sup>106</sup> For instance, Julia Hutchins states, “I want the prayers of the saints that I may stay humble.” *The Apostolic Faith*, 1, col. 4. Also Andrew Johnson, “Pray that God will keep me humble. I want to use the gifts to the glory of God.” *The Apostolic Faith*, 3, col. 1.

<sup>107</sup> Lawrence, *The Apostolic Faith*, 31.

<sup>108</sup> *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 10 (September 1907): 1, col. 4.

Humility as an essential theme ran through the thoughts and experiences of the Pentecostals at the Apostolic Faith Mission on Azusa Street. The geographical location and physical appearance of the building were humble. Those who came and were blessed were humbled in the meetings if they had not been humbled by the time they arrived. They understood that God could use anyone to speak to those assembled. That meant participants had to have humility enough to receive ministry from whomever God chose, whether a man, a woman, a child, or someone from a different ethnic or racial background. Regardless of whom God used, the Holy Spirit humbled the seekers at Azusa Street. Humbling put them in a position to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. By maintaining a humble disposition, they continued to be useful instruments in the hands of the Lord.

Actions of early Pentecostals in response to the Holy Spirit illustrate the value of humility. Although the word humility does not appear in the following accounts, the steps these people took in their desire to receive the Holy Spirit and their attempts to obey the Holy Spirit assume added importance when viewed through the lens of humility.

Maye F. Mayo writes to *The Apostolic Faith*, “The Lord talked with me, and told me what it would mean if I received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. I said, ‘I want it at any cost.’”<sup>109</sup> Mayo’s desire to be baptized in the Holy Spirit irrespective of the cost reflects the strong desire found in seekers in that day. Viewed through the lens of humility, Mayo sacrifices her personal wants, dreams, and aspirations in order to serve

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<sup>109</sup> *The Apostolic Faith*, 4, col. 3.

the Lord. There seems to be an implicit humility in her hunger for God. That she wanted the Holy Spirit at any cost suggests she was willing to say no to herself in order to say a deeper yes to God. The same could be said for another unnamed woman reported in *The Apostolic Faith*. She is simply described as, “A sister who was very hungry for the Pentecost [who] prayed for the Lord to strip her of everything, but give more of Himself.”<sup>110</sup> That prayer was put to the test shortly afterwards when her house burned down. In response, “she went out and knelt down in the woods and prayed, ‘Lord, you said all things work together for good to them that love you. Give me more of God.’”<sup>111</sup> *The Apostolic Faith* relates that God answered her prayer “and gave her a mighty baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire and she is shining for God.”<sup>112</sup> The concern is not whether God caused her house to burn down, but that her response to the fire demonstrated the sincerity of her initial prayer. She provides a vivid example of costly humility. She was willing to be reduced to nothing if it meant she would have a greater experience of God.

Humility may be expressed in the lengths to which people go to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. For example, H. M. Turney of San Jose, California, prayed persistently. He said, “I would arise at two o’clock in the morning, go away along in the mountains and spend hours in prayer for the power of God to come on me in greater measure. I would

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<sup>110</sup> *The Apostolic Faith*, 1, col. 2.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

get wonderfully blest, but would be back at it again the next morning, praying for God to give me the dynamite from heaven.”<sup>113</sup>

A woman named Julia Jenkins had a similar experience. Her quest to be baptized in the Holy Spirit took her to a tent meeting, and for seven days she prayed to be sanctified. She prayed another six days to be baptized in the Spirit.<sup>114</sup>

Often the lengths to which people went involved literal distance. In December 1906, *The Apostolic Faith* reported, “Hungry and thirsty souls are coming from hundreds and thousands of miles to get their personal Pentecost.”<sup>115</sup> Perhaps no story is more pointed than the story of Brother Andrews and his wife. Andrews and his wife, gospel workers from Tennessee, went to the Azusa Mission to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. According to *The Apostolic Faith*, “He and his wife were so hungry and had such faith that the Lord wanted them to come, that, not having the means, they started and walked quite a distance, till the Lord gave them the fare, and He is abundantly rewarding them.”<sup>116</sup> How does one even think about walking from Tennessee to Los Angeles? Their willingness to set out on foot demonstrates humility. Every step of the considerable distance they walked surely reminded them of both their lack of means and the frailty of their human strength.

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<sup>113</sup> *The Apostolic Faith*, 3, col. 1.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 8, col. 1.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, col. 5.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1.

Humility can also be detected behind expressions of obedience. Often obedience requires overriding a natural inclination in order to follow a new path. Consider the account of a woman baptized in a stream at a campground: “When she came to change her clothing, she attempted to put on her jewelry again but the Spirit would not let her, so she left it off.”<sup>117</sup> At least two things can be said that suggest humility expressed in the woman’s obedience. First, this woman overrode her own inclinations in order to obey the Holy Spirit. Second, her obedience involved the leaving off all that, in the eyes of early Pentecostals, represented worldly pride.

In other instances, people humbled themselves in order to overcome their natural inclinations and obey God. One instance involved a woman who was healed by God:

A woman in Santa Cruz was walking along the street with packages of drugs in her hands, which she had just purchased at the drug store, when she passed by the Apostolic Faith meeting and something said to her, “Go into that little mission and you will be healed.” They were praying for the sick. This sister had been greatly afflicted with rheumatism, but was instantly healed.<sup>118</sup>

In another story, a man was taking wood to town to sell it for money to buy groceries. On the way, the Lord twice told him to deliver the wood to a particular family instead. Each time the Lord spoke, the man objected. The third time the Lord spoke, the man recounted, “The voice spoke, and so strong that it scared me.”<sup>119</sup> The man obeyed. In both of these instances, the people had to overcome their own inclinations to obey God. The woman’s inclination can be seen in the drugs she had purchased from the drug

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 2, col. 4.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 6, col. 1. See also page 6, column 1.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 4, col. 1.



store. The man's inclination is evident in his resistance to do something other than he had planned with his load of wood. In both cases, the people expressed humility when they recognized that God's ways are higher than human ways.

Humility also expresses itself in love. Love stands at the center of Azusa Street Pentecostalism. *The Apostolic Faith* says,

The Pentecostal power, when you sum it all up, is just more of God's love. If it does not bring more love, it is simply a counterfeit. Pentecost means to live right in the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of First Corinthians, which is the standard. When you live there, you have no trouble to keep salvation. This is Bible religion. It is not a manufactured religion. Pentecost makes us love Jesus more and love our brother more. It brings us all into one common family.<sup>120</sup>

Pentecostal love is humble love. "Dear loved ones, we must have that pure love that comes down from heaven, love that is willing to suffer loss, love that is not puffed up, not easily provoked, but gentle, meek, and humble."<sup>121</sup> For the people at Azusa Street, humility characterized by love was the practical outworking of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Taylor articulated the spirituality of humility found in early Pentecostalism. In 1907, he published *The Spirit and the Bride*, in which he defended the Pentecostal experience. He provides a summary of humility as the early Pentecostals practiced it:

Read the Word, and spend much time in prayer. You must pray a great deal, otherwise the devil will sidetrack you. Enter into a spirit of constant prayer while you are at your daily occupation. Beg God to teach you to pray. Humble your spirit, and stay in an humble attitude. Never speak of yourself as of any importance; nay, let no such thought enter your heart. If such thoughts are

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<sup>120</sup> *The Apostolic Faith* 2, no. 13 (May 1908): 3, col. 2.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 4, col. 4.

presented, resist them with all the power of your soul. Be willing to go to any place to work for Jesus, and be content in the place where He puts you. Never try to get the lead, nor to do greater things than you are able. If you can't prevail with God in prayer, you are no good in this movement. . . . Take time to hear the Spirit talk. Be sure to follow only Him. . . . The great thing for you to do is to pray and believe. Let the Spirit attend to His own work. Give God all the glory all the time. Never praise man for anything. If a sermon helps you, give God the glory. . . . Do not rob Him.<sup>122</sup>

With this understanding of the role of humility in the spirituality of the Azusa Street revival, the next chapter discusses the contemporary church. Chapter 5 considers ways in which the early Pentecostals' understanding of humility can contribute to the revitalization of Pentecostal churches today.

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<sup>122</sup> Taylor, "The Spirit and the Bride," 137.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

The subject of the spiritual revitalization of Pentecostal churches is multi-faceted and this project has looked to the early Pentecostals at Azusa Street for their contribution. This paper singles out humility as a core dynamic that underwrote the spiritual vitality of the Azusa Street revival.

The image of William Seymour bowed in prayer behind an improvised pulpit in the Apostolic Faith Mission is powerfully suggestive for those seeking a revitalized Pentecostalism. Seymour did not have an attractive facility to meet in nor did he have any appreciable formal theological training. He was unimpressive as an orator. This is not to denigrate the value of adequate facilities, theological training, or homiletical skill, but it highlights Seymour's humility before God as his most important asset.

The testimonies of people associated with the Azusa Street revival express repeatedly the note of humility. At the heart of the experience was a humbling encounter with the Holy Spirit. There at the Apostolic Faith Mission, participants were stripped of their assumptions and pretenses, and their lives were rebuilt on a foundation of sheer dependence on the Holy Spirit. For early Pentecostals, humility was prerequisite to receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Further, once they received this spiritual empowering, they saw humility as essential to their continued usefulness to God. How

might this early Pentecostal emphasis on humility help in the quest to renew contemporary Pentecostal congregations?

This paper's introduction discussed Pastor Ted, a Pentecostal minister who felt strangely out of place in a Pentecostal worship service. Pastor Ted's struggle was not doctrinal. He upheld the same fundamentals of faith as those with whom he worshiped, but his struggle stemmed from his suspicion that the worshipers around him were trying too hard. Their expressions of praise were exactly what one would expect in a Pentecostal church, complete with verbal exclamations and hand clapping. Yet, it all seemed to be an attempt to sound and act the way Pentecostals are supposed to sound and act. The problem was that in the process this congregation revealed a lack of confidence in the Holy Spirit. This group of ostensibly Spirit-dependent people was actually depending on themselves to create a Pentecostal environment through a particular worship style. Though they were sincere, the worship experience was hollow because they had inadvertently substituted style for substance.

Fear can tempt Pentecostal worshipers to substitute style for substance. This can happen when good, Pentecost-loving people sense the Pentecostal fire wane in their church, their denomination, or their own hearts. Fearing the loss of this fire, they feel they need to do something. Some attempts to revitalize Pentecostal churches are reactive. They take the form of reinforcing Pentecostal doctrinal distinctives, or propagating Pentecostal traditions in worship. Other attempts are innovative, reflecting the latest spiritual fads or trends. These approaches are ironic, because Pentecostals historically have eschewed the exaltation of doctrine or tradition above experience; certainly spiritual

fads violate the spirit of a movement that looks back to the Day of Pentecost for its inspiration.

The problem is that there are few things an individual can do to bolster sagging Pentecostal vitality. One can reinforce belief in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but cannot baptize anyone else in the Holy Spirit. One can continue the traditions of expressive Pentecostal worship, but cannot thereby conjure the Holy Spirit. Vital Pentecostal experience can be desired, sought, and received, but it cannot be manipulated by human effort or ingenuity. It is, after all, a work of the Holy Spirit. In fact, an essential key to Pentecostal revitalization is found precisely in the humbling realization that there is little that one can do to bring it about. This chapter considers how humility can influence Pentecostal revitalization by creating an ethos of yearning, seeking, and obeying and concludes with reflections on the implications of humility for leaders in Pentecostal churches.

Humility validates yearning as a core Pentecostal virtue. It is possible for the humble to be honest and acknowledge their sense of emptiness and need because they recognize their utter dependence on God. Pentecostals can sometimes be reluctant to admit spiritual emptiness and need. Such reluctance can put Pentecostals in a bind. On the one hand, because of their belief in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they can be reluctant to admit to anything less than abundance in their spiritual life. On the other hand, when they feel empty the hollowness of their experience is inescapable. This leaves them in the unfortunate position of having to pretend. They go through all the right Pentecostal motions and say all the right Pentecostal things in spite of a spiritual deadness

inside. It is a kind of Pentecost by rote. Pretending does not necessarily constitute hypocrisy. Pretending can reflect an attempt to resolve the tension that occurs when an individual's experience contradicts sincerely held beliefs.

Pentecostals in search of spiritual revitalization do well to stop and make an honest assessment. Do the practices and rhetoric of Pentecostals match their experience, or have the practices and rhetoric become hollow and rote? If they have become hollow and rote, the path to revitalization lies in an honest admission of such to God, and not in redoubling a commitment to empty expressions of faith. Humility invites Pentecostals in search of revitalization to exercise courage and admit their emptiness. This is no shameful admission. Rather, this brand of humble honesty shuns pretense for the sake of spiritual vitality. It is an admission that signals a return to the yearning that earmarked the early Pentecostals.

This kind of honesty puts Pentecostal faith to the test. Do Pentecostals truly believe that their experience is the work of the Holy Spirit? There is a subtle, unspoken diminishing of the Holy Spirit that takes place when Pentecostals begin to compensate for the lack they feel. Pentecostals must remain mindful that compensating for a perceived absence of the Holy Spirit is tantamount to a lack of faith in the very Holy Spirit whose ministry they proclaim. The way to vitality follows the path of humility. Sometimes faith means standing before God with nothing but a yearning heart-cry.

The complement to yearning is seeking. By seeking we mean the concentration of desire in sustained prayer. Early Pentecostals were familiar with tarrying meetings in which they would spend extended times seeking God. The point is not to argue for a

return to tarrying meetings per se; however, the tarrying meeting serves as a reminder that yearning must be accompanied by seeking.

The assumption underlying the practice of seeking God is that there is no effective ministry apart from the empowering that comes from God. This attitude was inherited from Pentecostalism's nineteenth-century predecessors. The examination of them demonstrates how they took seriously the depth of human sin and the desperation of the fallen human condition. Consequently, they understood the futility of undertaking ministry in human strength alone. They were convinced they needed the power of God to attend their ministries. Their convictions led them to a posture of urgent, persistent prayer.

In light of this, Pentecostals seeking revitalization must be vigilant not to succumb to lazy Pentecostalism. This type of Pentecostalism may be sincere on some level, but lacks the depth that comes from humble seeking. In lazy Pentecostalism, God inevitably becomes a means to an end. The promises and power of God begin to look attractive as tools for attaining a better life. Lacking the resolve to seek the Lord in prayer, lazy Pentecostals are attracted to formulas, methods, or religious personalities that claim to harness the power of God. Lazy Pentecostalism, therefore, is necessarily superficial because it operates on the level of exuberance, style, and rhetoric.

The worshipers at Azusa Street would not have understood any of this. Theirs was a costly Pentecostalism and their experience of the Holy Spirit was born of humble and sacrificial prayer. They operated out of the conviction that before they needed God to deal with their problems, they themselves needed to be humbled, broken, and conformed

to God's will. Further, they sought the Lord because they understood the desperation of the fallen human condition, and the nature of the ministry that the human condition requires.

The Azusa Street participants show how the ministry needed in people's lives requires far more than Pentecostal exuberance, style or rhetoric. Polished song services cannot, in themselves, bring about needed spiritual transformation. Human methods may represent the best approach to the task at hand, but human methods without God's power are inadequate when the task at hand involves the transformation of people's lives through the gospel. This, according to the early Pentecostals, requires a sustained commitment to seeking the Lord.

In seeking the revitalization of Pentecostalism, the practice of seeking God must become a defining spiritual habit. An attitude of seeking is one in which purely human methods cannot substitute for divinely empowered initiatives and individuals must be humbled before God in order to be useful to God. Lazy Pentecostalism is superficial and deadening in the long run, but those who, in humility, seek the Lord will be rewarded.

In addition to yearning and seeking, obedience was another significant expression of humility for the early Pentecostals. They sought to follow the precepts of God's Word and the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Obedience requires humility, because obedience requires putting aside personal inclinations in deference to the will of another. Pentecostalism cannot be vital in the absence of obedience. Without obedience, Pentecostalism can easily degenerate into a quest for spiritual experiences. But even an entire resume of spiritual experiences will never ultimately satisfy. What is left after one



has been baptized in the Holy Spirit, has spoken in tongues, and has fallen down under the power of God? After all that, obedience remains. Obedience reveals self-seeking agendas and tames our quest for spiritual experiences.

Obedience also questions our notions of spiritual experience. Spiritual experience consists of more than phenomena that occur during prayer or worship. Spiritual experience also consists of proclaiming the gospel of God's kingdom in all its fullness, including caring for the poor, advocating for justice for the oppressed, bringing hope to the despairing. Obedience is essential to revitalized Pentecostalism. The call to obedience is the call to humble personal agendas in order to participate in God's agenda. In answering this call, individuals come face to face with the need for the power of the Holy Spirit. It is here that the power of revitalized Pentecostalism can be fully realized.

Finally, leaders of Pentecostal churches must also practice humility. Ministry is very much a calling to participate in something that humans cannot do. Pastors do not have the ability change lives, yet they must love people. The most skilled preaching will not bring about spiritual renewal, yet preachers must preach to the best of their abilities. Skills as counselors are inadequate to alter circumstances, yet pastors must counsel. Leadership initiatives cannot compel people to follow where they do not have a heart to go, yet leaders must lead.

Spiritual leadership begins with the recognition of our powerlessness. Ministry confronts leaders with the fact that their skills and abilities, in and of themselves, are insufficient to leverage people into spiritual transformation. Pastors are in a position of humble dependence on God. They stand as mere humans, between a broken world and an

all-powerful God. Leadership begins with a heart-cry, a prayer of desperation before a prayer-hearing God. God can and will use a pastor's training, skills, and abilities. But they are maximized when hearts are humble and dependent on God. Azusa Street demonstrates that, at its best, the hunger to be baptized in the Holy Spirit arises from humility that has fully come to terms with the insufficiency of human ability to bring about God's purposes. Leaders, therefore, must be careful and guard against prayerlessness. To be prayerless is to drift from God-dependency into self-sufficiency. The further leaders drift into self-sufficiency, the further they stray from humility.

Nowhere is the drift into self-sufficiency more broadly evident than in the pulpit. Pentecostals value anointed, or Spirit-empowered, preaching, but their understanding of anointed preaching can vary. Sometimes preachers are said to be anointed because their style is charismatic, or they preach in a loud, energized voice. By this standard, William Seymour would never be considered to be anointed. By all accounts, Seymour's preaching was devoid of style, but it was attended by a sense of the presence of God. Those who pride themselves in being open to the Holy Spirit must remain aware that over-identifying style with anointing can make them less open to the Spirit. When leaders are open to the Spirit in only a particular style of ministry, they can become prejudiced against anointed ministries that do not fit their own expectations.

Related to the question of style in anointed preaching is the question of content. Humility in preaching requires the willingness to submit to ardent, prayerful study and preparation. This includes reading what others have written about the Bible and theology. The historic Pentecostal bias against formal education warned against the pride of

learning. There is certainly a caution to be heeded, but there also must be a warning against the pride of ignorance. When Charles Parham opened his Bible Schools, he was adamant that the Bible was his only textbook; however, when the Bible becomes the only textbook, preconceived notions become the only curriculum. There are no voices to correct errors, reveal blind spots, or impart insights. Leaders can end up in the unfortunate position that nobody can tell them anything unless they tell them what they already know. How can pastors be effective teachers and preachers if nobody can teach them anything?

The reality is that extended hours of study are humbling. The discipline of study humbles our restlessness. Study takes time and challenges a sense of values. “What is the value of hours spent in study,” one might ask, “when I could be out doing something for God?” The answer to that question is heard in pulpits each week. Shallow, hollow, unstudied sermons show how individuals cannot answer the call to be anointed preachers without the assistance of others, specifically those called by God to write the books that are waiting to be read.

When humble, prayerful study does not inform Pentecostal preaching, the preaching is not just shallow, though shallow preaching is enough to deaden congregational vitality. Perhaps worse, the preaching can become harsh. Sometimes preachers and congregations alike mistake caustic preaching for powerful preaching. Preachers are thought to be anointed when they “tell it like it is.” But harsh, caustic, or manipulative words betray human attempts to be powerful preachers. This human

impersonation of the Holy Spirit's ministry is deadly to the Pentecostal vitality of churches.

Finally, leaders must be careful about how they understand success in ministry. The leaders at the Apostolic Faith Mission were concerned to give God glory for good things that happened. They were careful not to take credit for things God did. This might seem artificially self-effacing if they did not realize the utter inability to bring about God-ordained results in their own strength. But once individuals realize that, though God may use them, only God can bring about those results, they are in an interesting situation. How do leaders talk about successes? They can no longer sit in elder meetings or stand in congregational business meetings and report about what they have accomplished. In reality, the accomplishments worth mentioning are things God has accomplished, sometimes through them and often through the congregation.

What rightly belongs on the resume of a pastor or other Christian leader? A look at Azusa Street suggests that it is not the size of our congregations or budgets. Nor is it the impressiveness of our church buildings. Nor is it the extent of our media exposure through television, radio, or podcasts. For the leaders at Azusa Street, success in ministry is gauged by the answers to a few basic questions: Are they depending on God? Do their hearts yearn for God? Are they earnestly seeking God? Are they obeying God?

Whatever else it means to be Pentecostal, humility stands at the core. The Azusa Street leaders reveal simple, God-dependent humility at the heart of the great revival at the Apostolic Faith Mission. In the quest for revitalized Pentecostal churches, their example is a valuable guide.

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