

ABSTRACT

A Rhetorical History of Race Relations in the Early Pentecostal Movement, 1906-1916

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In the spring of 1906, a religious awakening, known as the Azusa Street Revival, began at a small prayer meeting in Los Angeles. With its emphasis on an experiential “baptism in the Holy Spirit” and the accompanying phenomenon of “speaking in tongues,” this awakening launched the Pentecostal movement, which now claims millions of adherents globally. Besides the emphasis on spirit-inspired utterances, the early stage of this revival was marked by a sense of interracial unity, unprecedented within American Christianity and unique for its time. This rhetorical history documents how this counter-cultural racial integration was nurtured rhetorically in the early revival and how the message of interracial unity was soon eclipsed by other priorities. I argue that the transcendent, spiritualized rhetoric of unity was effective on a local level, but lacked the tools necessary to integrate the movement on a national level in the midst of a segregated culture.

A Rhetorical History of Race Relations in the Early Pentecostal Movement, 1906-1916

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The beginning of the modern Pentecostal movement, within just the first two decades of the 20th century, was one of those rare occasions when black and white Americans—black and white Christians—came together. At the Azusa Street Revival of 1906, it was reported: “Everybody was just the same, it did not matter if you were black, white, green or grizzly. There was a wonderful spirit. Germans and Jews, black and whites, ate together in the little cottage at the rear. Nobody ever thought of color.”¹ Frank Bartleman, one of the early leaders and historians of the movement, perhaps put it best when he described the situation at Azusa Street in Los Angeles: “The ‘color line’ was washed away in the Blood.”²

Interestingly, the situation in which this unprecedented racial integration during the height of the Jim Crow era occurred was not a political or activist movement, nor was it necessarily focused on the issue of race. Rather, it was a religious, or spiritual, union. By way of background, the modern Pentecostal movement is a growing group within Christianity that began in America at the turn of the 20th century. While those associated with the Pentecostal movement have hailed from a variety of heritages within the Christian tradition, Pentecostalism arose predominantly from the Holiness movement of the late 19th century. This was especially true in the case of African Americans.

As distinguished from other branches of Christianity, Pentecostals converge around a common experience, usually termed “the baptism in the Holy Spirit,” which usually involves evidence of *glossolalia*, or supernaturally speaking in a tongue unknown

to the speaker.³ Pentecostal belief almost always emphasizes belief in divine healing and personal holiness, as well, and the early Pentecostals, in particular, also had a strong sense of the imminent return of Jesus Christ to the world and an equally strong commitment to pacifism. Pentecostalism is based primarily on a shared experience, as opposed to a strict doctrinal stance or a common organizational structure, and was birthed from a revival movement, which began at Azusa Street in Los Angeles in 1906, under the leadership of William J. Seymour. Because of this emphasis on experience, Pentecostals come from a wide array of backgrounds. In fact, currently, there are dozens of denominations that call themselves Pentecostal, and there are even more individuals within mainline and evangelical denominations that view themselves as charismatic.⁴

In the early Pentecostal movement, those involved generally abhorred denominational restrictions and formal organizational structures. As the movement quickly began to gain more participants and started to receive more attention, both positive and negative, loose fellowships and associations began to arise, where the membership and even the nomenclature of the associations was fluid. Because of the fierce opposition experienced by the early Pentecostals, especially from segregationists who found fault with their racial unity, these associations became very necessary. Even when new associations were beginning to form, Pentecostals were quick to emphasize that they were not organizing new denominations or sects. In writing on the “black origins of the Pentecostal movement,” Leonard Lovett notes that there have been “over ten ‘Churches of God,’” including the Church of God in Christ, founded by Bishop Charles Harrison Mason.⁵ This primarily African American denomination—one of the more structured organizations within the Pentecostal movement and the largest Pentecostal

denomination in the United States—is one of the groups on which I will focus in tracing the rhetorical history of race relations in the early Pentecostal movement.

Today, there are over 10 million people in the main U.S. Pentecostal denominations alone, and worldwide there are over 500 million Pentecostals and charismatics.⁶ In the past one hundred years, the relatively new phenomenon of Pentecostalism has become one of the largest streams of Christianity worldwide, second only to Roman Catholicism.⁷ While the Pentecostal movement has grown steadily among many races and in various cultures, in America, especially, the movement quickly began to splinter along racial lines. Perhaps influenced by outside factors and, more importantly, reflected by the actions and rhetoric of those within the movement, “the color line,” unfortunately was soon to reappear, beginning with Charles Parham’s (a forerunner of the Pentecostal movement) racist critique of the revival at Azusa Street led by William Seymour. Thus, this brief period of racial unity—and subsequent division—provides a unique case study in examining the discursive nature of race relations at a crucial moment both for American race relations and for the growth of the Christian religion.

Thesis Question

The object of this thesis is to trace the rhetorical history of the modern Pentecostal movement from its racially integrated beginnings at the Los Angeles revival of 1906-1909 to its *de facto* segregated state and the rhetorical responses to that change. Specifically, this thesis will focus on the first ten years of race relations during the development of Pentecostalism. While there are varying views regarding the event that marks the beginning of the 20th-Century Pentecostal movement, for the purposes of this paper, April 10, 1906, the date in which William Seymour arrived to conduct a revival in Los Angeles,

will mark the beginning of the study. I will follow the development of the movement through a ten-year period from 1906 to 1916, as the movement went from a fully integrated revival to a mostly segregated movement.

In examining this development, I will seek to answer the following four questions:

1. *What were the aspects of initial racial integration in the early Pentecostal movement, and how was this achieved?*
2. *How did the rhetoric of the movement's leaders serve to reflect, and even accomplish, this counter-cultural unity between blacks and whites?*
3. *At what points and on what issues was the initial racial integration of the early Pentecostal movement compromised?*
4. *How did rhetoric from both races, and from within and outside the movement, serve to encourage, reflect, accomplish, and/or justify racial segregation?*

The answers to these four questions are significant for various reasons, not just for Pentecostals and church historians, but also for rhetoric scholars and those interested in the general issue of how race relations are treated discursively.

Review of Literature

Primary Sources

The primary literature that will be utilized for the analysis of race relations in the early Pentecostal movement consists of Pentecostal newsletters, pamphlets, autobiographies, contemporary newspaper articles, and books chronicling the movement from either the African American or European American perspective. Not only do these sources from the early Pentecostal movement function to document the nature of race relations at different points within its development, but they also preserve some of the discourse that helped to shape the way in which blacks and whites were integrated, or segregated. The main sources of information from this period have been the various

extant newsletters and periodicals distributed by different groups within the Pentecostal movement. Some of these include the *Apostolic Faith*, *Word and Witness*, and the *Evangel* (now known as the *Today's Pentecostal Evangel*).⁸ In particular, the *Apostolic Faith*, published in part by African American and integrationist Pentecostal leader William J. Seymour, both gives a first-hand narration of the early Azusa Street revival and documents Seymour's response to racial criticism of integration.

A second mine of primary source material from the decade has been found in autobiographical and biographical books. Frank Bartleman, a leader and historian of the Azusa Street movement, writes about the early movement in several contemporary newspapers and has also collected his account in *Another Wave Rolls In*. Charles Parham published two books, both containing a compilation of some of his sermons: *A Voice Crying in the Wilderness* and *Everlasting Gospel*. *The Man, Charles Harrison Mason (1866-1961)* written by Bishop Mason's wife, Mrs. Elsie W. Mason, includes personal accounts of many of the leader's experiences with the Pentecostal movement. There is also a second work containing transcripts of Mason's sermons, *The History and Life Work of Elder Mason Chief Apostle and His Co-Laborers*, compiled by his daughter, Mary Mason. Thirdly, reports from outside the Pentecostal movement, such as those from newspapers and magazines, help to shed light on the societal and governmental structures that affected integration and segregation within the early Pentecostal movement. In particular, the *Los Angeles Times* provided several articles describing the events of the Azusa Street revival. Moreover, there were also some books written by critics of the Pentecostal movement, such as *Demons and Tongues*, by Alma White, that find the interracial nature of the movement as one of the primary faults of the early Pentecostals.

Passages such as the one describing a scene from the Azusa mission, decrying the fact that “a colored woman had her arms around a white man’s neck, praying for him” not only help to historically described what happened in the early Pentecostal revival meetings but also set the context of racial controversy in which Pentecostal rhetorics were developed.⁹

Finally, there are several publications of minutes, doctrinal statements and the like that are also still available for analysis. Of particular value in this category is Dr. Larry Martin’s full reprint of William Seymour’s *The Doctrines and Disciplines of the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission of Los Angeles, California*, which Seymour originally published in 1915. Also, the minutes of the annual General Council meetings of the Assemblies of God were also beneficial historical records of race relations in the early Pentecostal movement.

Secondary Literature

Regarding second-hand accounts, one of the leading researchers of the early Pentecostal movement has been Vinson Synan, who has written over a dozen books on the subject and is also a regular contributor to many journals on the topic of Pentecostalism. *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States*, *Aspects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Origins*, and *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal*, and are some of the titles that were most useful to this particular work. Recently, Dr. Larry Martin has also released a historical series documenting the Azusa Street revival. In the series are a biography of William Seymour and also several compilations of archival materials. Another Pentecostal history that was most helpful in describing some of the early leaders of the movement is a volume edited James R. Goff, Jr. and Grant Wacker, *Portraits of a Generation: Early Pentecostal Leaders*. This volume

contains over a dozen chapters, each dedicated to giving a snapshot of an early leader in Pentecostalism. Among the chapters in the volume significant to this study are David Daniels' chapter on Charles Harrison Mason, Roger Robins' chapter on A. J. Tomlinson, and Edith L. Blumhofer's chapter on William Durham. These chapters each provided a coherent glimpse of some of the major characters whose rhetoric is examined in this study. While the majority of secondary sources are used in order to give historical context to the discursive negotiation of race relations, there are also some previous works that deal specifically with race relations within the Pentecostalism. One of these is a Ph.D. dissertation by Raybon Joel Newman that focuses specifically on the Assemblies of God and their history of race relations. Another work that traces the devolution of Pentecostalism from an integrated revival movement to mostly segregated denominations is the book *The Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism in the USA*, by Iain MacRobert, a British researcher. One thing MacRobert emphasizes in his book is the racist reaction of Charles Parham to what he saw occurring during the revival at the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles. Parham described the supernatural phenomena among blacks and whites at Azusa as "animalism" and claimed that the black and white intermingling he saw at Azusa Street "should be enough to bring a blush of shame to devils, let alone angels."¹⁰ Of course, though many whites may not have been completely comfortable with some of the African-American religious expressions, in 1909, even Parham's own informal organization, the Apostolic Faith, rejected his leadership.¹¹ While the blatant racism of those such as Parham was condemned, the Pentecostal movement was nonetheless regressing to a state of implicit racial segregation. Other authors also deal in varying degrees with the issue of race relations in early Pentecostalism, though not

all reach the same conclusions. While Walter J. Hollenweger describes Pentecost as “an intercultural agent throwing a bridge across the troubled waters between two cultures which otherwise may never meet,” Howard Nelson Kenyon puts forth the hypothesis that “a permanent breakthrough in race relations” never fully occurred within the Pentecostal movement.¹² Thus, this is one question that a rhetorical look at this issue will be able to help clarify.

The nature of racism itself, both within the Pentecostal movement and also within American Christianity, in general, is also important in analyzing the integration and segregation of the races in early Pentecostalism. Leonard Lovett, who writes from within the Pentecostal movement, is a passionate critic of racism and its influence in the Church. In particular, he addresses the problem of racial division not on an individual level but on an institutional one.¹³ This approach to racial division in the church should be helpful in this historical analysis, since the regression from integration back to segregation seems to be concurrent with the process of institutionalization of the Pentecostal movement.

On a broader level, Milmon F. Harrison has conducted one of the few investigations on Christianity and race relations from the perspective of a communications scholar. In one article, he conducts an ethnographic investigation of current initiatives toward racial integration within the Christian music industry.¹⁴ Furthermore, John Youngblood and J. Emmett Winn study the communication in an African American Pentecostal church and seem to set their study within the larger context of the African American community.¹⁵ Though Youngblood and Winn’s study does not deal directly with the topic of racial integration, it does help to clarify the significance of the relationship between race, religion, and communication. Overall, though, there has so far

been no rhetorical history written on the Pentecostal movement, and this will be the first work of its kind that looks specifically at the rhetoric of race relations during the significant racially integrated era of Pentecostalism.

Methodology

In order to properly answer the questions I have set forth above and to apply the data from the literature and first-hand artifacts to those questions, I will analyze the integration and segregation in the early Pentecostal period using a historical analysis of rhetoric, which focuses on rhetoric as a means of illuminating its historical context. The historical analysis of rhetoric serves both a narrative and a critical function, as does any history. While a narrative of race relations in early Pentecostalism is of interest to church historians, an analysis of the way this was discursively negotiated provides an interesting case study for the problem of race relations, both in America and in Christendom.

Specifically, this thesis is focused on Pentecostals' race rhetoric (or lack of it), both as a force shaping racial (de)segregation, and also "as an index or mirror" of the relationship between the races.¹⁶ Because "the rhetorical process is the central epistemic function by which societies [and thus religious movements] constitute themselves," an analysis of the rhetoric of early Pentecostals in regard to race issues is useful not only in regard to seeing how leaders of the Pentecostal movement responded to racial tensions, but also in how the rhetoric shaped the relationship between blacks and whites in the early Pentecostal movement.¹⁷ With a historical analysis, I will look at texts ranging from contemporary newspaper articles in order to determine the sociological, economic, and legal context for the rhetoric of the early Pentecostals to the sermons and publications of the Pentecostal leaders themselves. In particular, I will focus on several primary

“characters” within this analysis: William J. Seymour, the black integrationist leader of the Azusa Street Revival; Charles F. Parham, the racist forerunner to, and later condemner of, the revival in Los Angeles on Azusa Street; William Durham, the preacher who introduced a non-racial, yet divisive theology to the movement; Bishop C.H. Mason, leader of the predominately black Church of God in Christ; W. F. Carothers, a former associate of Parham and one who argued for the harmony of brotherly love and racial segregation; and E. N. Bell, editor of the *Word and Witness* and the first General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God, a primarily white organization that is said (disputably) to have split from its roots in the Church of God in Christ.

Chapter Overview

To provide an orderly analysis of the rhetoric of racial integration and segregation within the early Pentecostal movement, and to answer the questions framing this thesis paper, the main body of the thesis, following this introduction, is organized under the following chapters:

Chapter 2: “Background to the Holiness-Pentecostal Movement” provides a brief background and description of the forerunners leading to the Pentecostal movement. This chapter also describes the variety of backgrounds from which most early Pentecostals came, which gives some historical context to the nature of later segregation (both racial and non-racial) within the movement.

Chapter 3: “William Seymour and Initial Integration at Azusa” describes the extent and nature of the racial integration at the catalyst revival in Los Angeles. More significantly, the chapter also examines the ways in which this integration was encouraged and described rhetorically.

Chapter 4: “Charles Parham and Dis-integration at Azusa” examines Parham’s scathing rhetoric regarding the supposed “animalism” and other “shameful” aspects of desegregation in Los Angeles during the period from 1906 to 1909. The chapter also looks at several other challenges to the initial integrationist vision of the Azusa Street revival.

Chapter 5: “Race Relations and Growth Beyond Los Angeles” chronicles the expansion of the Pentecostal movement across the United States. It also looks at the sustenance of racial integration within the movement during its expansion from a local revival to a national movement. Special attention is given to C. H. Mason and the Church of God in Christ.

Chapter 6: “The Re-drawing of ‘The Color Line’” investigates the breakdown of racial unity within Pentecostalism. In particular, it examines the events and rhetoric surrounding the formation of the Assemblies of God from 1910 to 1916. This chapter will also describe the rhetoric of Assemblies of God members describing their previous relationship with the Church of God in Christ.

Conclusion

In summary, this thesis investigates the nature of race relations within the early Pentecostal movement at the beginning of the 20th century. This rhetorical history of the Pentecostal movement from 1906-1916 serves first to identify the nature of race relations in the early Pentecostal movement and then to analyze the ways in which rhetorical messages help to achieve, encourage, and reflect racial unity in the midst of a society marked by racial antagonism, while also delineating the process through which this racial unity was broken. Moreover, this study also investigates the response to the consequent

racial segregation, as well as the ways in which the segregation was justified through rhetorical means. Finally, this rhetorical history of race relations within the early Pentecostal movement also helps to address the seeming discrepancies between the Anglo-American and African-American accounts of the history of the early Pentecostal movements and of its predecessors and influences.

In conclusion, the Azusa Street revival sparking the Pentecostal movement is important to the understanding of race relations within American Christianity, especially as the movement provides a unique model both of integration (at least, temporarily) and of the subsequent reversal of racial reconciliation. Furthermore, the early Pentecostal movement of the 20th century is highly significant to the status of race relations today, for as Walter Hollenweger notes, Pentecost is “an intercultural agent throwing a bridge across the troubled waters between two cultures which otherwise may never meet.”¹⁸ How that bridge was first built and then abandoned is the subject of this thesis.

Notes

¹Mattie Cummings; qtd. in Iain MacRobert, *The Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism in the USA*, (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1988), 56.

²Frank Bartleman, *Another Wave Rolls In! (formerly) What Really Happened at "Azusa Street?"*, edited by John Walker, (Monroeville, PA: Whitaker Books, 1962), 55.

³Additionally, some early Pentecostals, such as Charles Parham, held that the manifestation of unknown tongues received at baptism was in fact *xenolalia*, or another human language, unknown to the speaker. For Parham, Holy Spirit baptism with the accompanying evidence of *xenolalia* was part of the overall plan for world evangelization, as missionaries would simply go to the people group who spoke the language the missionary had received upon Holy Spirit baptism. See Larry Martin, *The Topeka Outpouring of 1901: 100th Anniversary Edition* (Joplin, MO: Christian Life Books, 2001), 29.

⁴The term "charismatic" generally refers to an ecumenical movement with Pentecostal influences that began about the mid 20th century. While charismatics embrace the Pentecostal emphasis on the personal experience and on supernatural manifestations of Holy Spirit, they do not necessarily hold to any other shared Pentecostal beliefs and oftentimes remain in non-Pentecostal denominations. For a review of Pentecostal denominations, see Charles Edwin Jones, *A Guide to the Study of the Pentecostal Movement*, (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1983).

⁵Leonard Lovett, "Black Origins of the Pentecostal Movement," in Vinson Synan, ed., *Aspects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Origins* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1975), 139.

⁶James R. Goff, Jr. and Grant Wacker, Introduction to *Portraits of a Generation: Early Pentecostal Leaders*, (Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 2002), xi.

⁷Ibid, xi.

⁸In fact, there were four separate newsletters that went by the name *Apostolic Faith*. The first is the newsletter published by Charles Parham. After Parham was ousted from his loose organization, E. N. Bell continued publishing the *Apostolic Faith* newsletter, while Parham began another *Apostolic Faith* of his own. Bell's newsletter eventually changed its name (after merging with another Pentecostal paper) to *Word and Witness*, in 1910. Additionally, Seymour published an *Apostolic Faith* newsletter from the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles from 1906 to 1908. Then, in 1908, Florence Crawford and Clara Lum (former editor of Seymour's paper) moved from Los Angeles to Portland and began to publish the *Apostolic Faith* newsletter there.

⁹Alma White, *Demons and Tongues*, (Zarephath, NJ: Pillar of Fire Publishers, 1949).

¹⁰Qtd. in MacRobert, *Black Roots*, 60.

¹¹Carl Brumback, *Suddenly... From Heaven: A History of the Assemblies of God*, (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1961), 152.

¹²Walter J. Hollenweger, Foreword to Iain MacRobert, *The Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism in the USA*, (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1988), xiv; Howard Nelson Kenyon, "An Analysis of Racial Separation Within the Early Pentecostal Movement" (M.A. thesis, Baylor University, 1978), 1.

¹³Cf. Leonard Lovett, *Kingdom Beyond Color (Please, Try Getting Under My Skin)*, (Kennesaw, GA: Higher Standard Publishers, LLC,).

¹⁴Milmon F. Harrison, "'ERACE-ing' the Color Line: Racial Reconciliation in the Christian Music Industry," *Journal of Media & Religion* 4, (2005), 27-44.

¹⁵John D. Youngblood and Emmett J. Winn, "Shout Glory: Competing Communication Codes Experienced by the Members of the African American Pentecostal Genuine Deliverance Holiness Church," *Journal of Communication* 54 (June 2004): 355-370.

¹⁶David Zarefsky, "Four Senses of Rhetorical History," in *Doing Rhetorical History: Concepts and Cases*, ed. Kathleen J. Turner (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1998), 29. In this chapter arguing for the significance of doing rhetorical history, Zarefsky seeks to clarify several misconceptions regarding what is and is not good rhetorical history. In describing what constitutes a rhetorical history, he offers the distinction of four different types of rhetorical history. According to Zarefsky's classification, then, this thesis specifically seeks to offer a historical study of rhetorical events.

¹⁷Kathleen J. Turner, *Doing Rhetorical History: Concepts and Cases*, (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1998), 6.

¹⁸Hollenweger, Foreword, xiv.

CHAPTER TWO

Background to the Holiness-Pentecostal Movement

The focus of this study is the rhetoric of race relations in the early Pentecostal movement. While Charles Parham's doctrine of the Holy Spirit baptism—and the corresponding Azusa Street revival that made both the doctrine and experience available to thousands of people, of all races, worldwide—defined the Pentecostal experience, the notion of a postconversion experience or even the spiritual phenomenon of speaking fluently in an unknown language was not entirely new to the world at the beginning of the 20th Century. In fact, early Pentecostals trace their roots to a biblical event nearly two millennia before, and the movement itself was in many ways the extension of a previous revival movement in America that lasted throughout the 19th century: the Holiness movement. Thus, to understand the context in which this rhetoric of racial integration and segregation played out, this chapter will first lay out a brief outline of the continued presence of supernatural phenomena within Christianity from its foundations; next, I will describe the immediate forerunners of the Pentecostal revival—those in the Holiness movement—including an examination of racial attitudes within the movement. Then, this chapter will give an account of the birth of the Pentecostal movement itself. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a brief account of some of the Holiness leaders active during the birth of Pentecostalism.

Historical Predecessors

While the Pentecostal movement is said to have been sparked in 1906 at the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, the practices, beliefs, and supernatural experiences that defined early Pentecostalism were certainly not peculiar to this period of Christian history. Though Pentecostalism can be distinguished from other Christian movements by its belief structures and emphases on certain landmark spiritual experiences, these beliefs and experiences have precedents in earlier Christian groups. In particular, the practice of speaking in unknown languages, which is the primary distinguishing aspect of modern Pentecostals, is seen from the very beginning of the history of Christianity. In fact, it is first demonstrated about AD 33, during the event that many consider the founding of the Christian Church.¹

In Acts 2 it is recorded that 120 remaining followers of the resurrected Jesus Christ are gathered in an “upper room” in Jerusalem after his ascension into heaven, waiting—as Jesus had commanded—for their baptism in the Holy Spirit.² According to the biblical account, Jesus’ followers were gathered together when “suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven” and filled the room, accompanied by a manifestation resembling “tongues of fire” resting on each person present. Moreover, “all of them were filled with the [Holy] Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.”³ It was during this occurrence that Jesus’ followers ceased their waiting and actively began to carry out Jesus’ parting orders to serve as his witnesses, with the goal of eventually sharing what they had experienced with everyone, even to “the ends of the earth.”⁴ Because this occurrence signaled the readiness of Jesus’ followers to fulfill all of Jesus’ commands, it was a foundational time in the formation of the Christian Church. At

the same time, while this event marked the inauguration of the widespread propagation of the story of Jesus, his early followers viewed this event as one to be repeated. Even shortly after this initial experience, the Bible records that the disciples were “filled with the Holy Spirit” again on a separate occasion.⁵ While exact recurrences of this event have not been seen, the individual aspects of what happened in this account—supernatural wind, appearances of a non-consuming fire, Christian believers speaking in tongues—have continued in some form throughout the history of the Church. For Pentecostals, in particular, the practice of speaking in unknown languages (or “speaking in tongues”) as led by God has become the determining sign in identifying a Christian’s baptism in the Holy Spirit; and it is this doctrinal position that distinguishes the Pentecostal movement from other groups within Christianity. In addition to the events at the first Pentecost, speaking in tongues is specifically identified two other times in the book of Acts, and it is also discussed extensively in Paul’s first epistle to the Christians in Corinth.⁶

Though it appears that most of the first Christians often experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit in a supernatural way, as the first century A.D. came to a close, the emphasis on spirituality and the sorts of practices now emphasized by modern Pentecostals—prophecy, healing, and, particularly, speaking in tongues—began to diminish. However, there remained throughout history groups of Christians who experienced these phenomena. Among these was Justin Martyr, who founded a training school C. 150 A.D., which encouraged and saw the occurrence of exorcisms, healings, and prophecies.⁷ Outlining some early predecessors to the modern Pentecostal revival, Roberts Liardon mentions the Montanists as some of those who continued in the outward manifestations of the Holy Spirit, though their teaching was not wholly orthodox.⁸

Tertullian, Hilary, and Ambrose were other more prominent Christians, among others, who continued this tradition into the second, third, and fourth centuries.⁹ During the medieval period, there began to appear small groups of Christians outside the mainstream Roman Catholic Church who emphasized spirituality and who also recorded accounts of believers speaking in tongues. Among these scattered groups are the Waldenses of France and northern Italy, as well as the Abilgenses scattered throughout Europe. Also, St. Francis of Assisi and St. Francis Xavier are others who are reported to have spoken in tongues.¹⁰

During the Reformation, some groups sprung up who, though they did not necessarily engage in the “speaking in tongues” phenomena, did embrace other more physical manifestations of the Spirit common to modern Pentecostals. For instance, Martin Luther believed in divine healing, prophecy, and also engaged in battle with the devil. The Camisards and Anabaptists were other, more extreme, reformers who embraced teachings similar to the Pentecostals of the early 20th Century, including speaking in tongues. Then, in the 1700s, the Moravians also continued this tradition and, in one meeting, “saw the hand of God and were all baptized with his Holy Spirit,” resulting in various signs and manifestations.¹¹ It was a group of Moravians who directly influenced John Wesley in his search for spiritual renewal, resulting eventually in the birth of the Methodist movement, from which many 20th century Pentecostals originally came.

Pentecostal Forerunners

Pentecostalism, in general, can best be seen as a river into which many tributaries flow, though the movement that most directly influenced Pentecostalism, and out of which the Pentecostal experience in early 20th century America grew, was the Wesleyan

Holiness movement. In fact, the two movements are so close that many current historians coalesce the two, referring to it as a Holiness-Pentecostal tradition. However, other historians see the two as more distinct, particularly citing the intermediary influence of the Keswick and other movements on Pentecostalism.¹² The Keswick movement was an ecumenical movement in England and the United States bringing together Christians who were interested in pursuing the “Higher Life,” or living a life daily influenced by the divine. Both the Keswick and Holiness movements initiated in many Christians the desire for a deeper, abiding spirituality beyond the initial conversion, salvation experience. This desire of course laid a foundation of receptivity for the Pentecostal doctrine of Holy Spirit baptism. Consequently, the revival movements of the 19th-century—and the Holiness movement in particular—provided the primary foundation for the modern Pentecostal experience.

Regarding this foundation, the Holiness movement was essentially a response to the moral laxity and spiritual staleness of the once revivalistic Protestant denominations in the 19th century. It also included a continuation of John Wesley’s belief in Christian perfection, which impacted America through the Awakenings and smaller revivals of the 18th and 19th centuries. Simply put, Christian perfection was Wesley’s belief that the path to Christian maturity consisted of “two separate phases of experience for the believer: the first, conversion, or justification; the second, Christian perfection, or sanctification.”¹³ While the first experience ensured salvation and entrance to heaven after death, the second experience was for the Christian’s life on earth, and removed the believer’s propensity for willful disobedience to God. This was primarily a reaction to what many saw as laxity and worldliness in the established churches of the day. Thus, Wesley believed that a

postconversion experience was necessary for a believer to live a full Christian life.

Wesley's beliefs were perpetuated through the succession of revival movements in the late 18th and 19th centuries and also through the Methodist organization Wesley had established.

This second experience was sometimes called a "second blessing" or "sanctification," though by the late 1800s, more and more Holiness adherents were linking this experience with its biblical precedent, referring to this second work in more Pentecostal terms, such as the "baptism with the Holy ghost."¹⁴ In fact, this more Pentecostal emphasis was also reflected in the Keswick offshoot of the Holiness movement, which blossomed mainly in England following the first Keswick convention in 1875, but was spurred in America by subsequent conferences conducted by D.L. Moody in the late 1800s.

Basically, the Keswick doctrine differed from traditional holiness teachings in that the second experience was less of an eradication of a believer's sinful nature than a bestowing of power to rightly live the Christian life. Thus, the emphasis of the sanctification experience became less on the ethical aspect and more on the empowerment for Christian life on earth. This also helped promote the experiential aspect of sanctification.¹⁵ Moreover, particularly with the broad appeal of D.L. Moody, the concept of a postconversion experience began to be accepted within mainline American evangelicalism from all denominations rather than being associated exclusively with the Wesleyan-Holiness sects. While this opened up the forthcoming Pentecostal doctrine to a broader scope of Christians, it also created a fracture line along which Pentecostals would later split.

While the Keswick movement opened the concept of a “second blessing” to a larger audience, the Wesleyan-Holiness movement—in which the concept of a postconversion sanctification experience originated—was beginning to split. In the decades before the turn of the 20th century, many Methodist leaders began questioning the basic doctrinal premises of the Holiness movement, creating a denominational controversy which resulted in the disassociation of Methodism from the Holiness movement. This, in turn, led to the creation of several new holiness denominations, most of which were founded between 1885 and 1907, right before the advent of Pentecostalism, which was sparked by the Azusa Street Revival of 1906.¹⁶ Among these new denominations were the Church of God (Cleveland, TN), the Christian and Missionary Alliance, the Church of the Nazarene, and the Church of God in Christ. While some of these denominations later became Pentecostal, others were divided and split by Pentecostal doctrine. Thus, the Holiness movement not only provided a direct theological foundation from which the Pentecostal doctrine was born, but most of the original proponents of the Pentecostal experience came from Holiness backgrounds. Pentecostalism can be seen theologically as a sect within the Holiness tradition, while at the same time—because so many early Pentecostals came from Holiness groups—it was in many ways the next step in the Holiness movement. “In fact, a number of prominent leaders in the early Pentecostal movement moved first from Methodism to Holiness,” and then received the doctrine and experience of Pentecostalism.¹⁷ Because of this direct link, the Holiness movement had a profound impact on Pentecostalism.

Race in the American Holiness Movement

There is no uniform way to describe the overall racial attitudes of the Holiness movement. Institutionally, most Holiness churches mirrored other denominational churches in the fact that, before the Civil War, the churches were mainly integrated. After 1865, however, the churches began splitting along racial lines. This should not be seen as primarily due to a surge in racial prejudice, but rather as a result of the freedom that African Americans were now given to actually become leaders of their own churches and denominational groups.¹⁸ Thus, to a large degree, racial attitudes within the Holiness movement were not significantly different than in the rest of the United States.

One exception to this rule was John Alexander Dowie, who also had a significant effect on many early Pentecostal leaders. A nationally known healing evangelist of the Holiness movement, Dowie had a very radical policy in favor of racial integration. Not only did he insist on integrated seating at his meetings, he also ensured that there was at least one African American on his 12-person leadership board.¹⁹ Moreover, “He placed the blame for race conflict in the United States squarely on the shoulders of white society,” and he even advocated interracial marriage, and the consequent blurring of racial lines, as “the only long-term solution” for racial prejudice.²⁰ Though his impact on Pentecostalism was very significant, especially in the way he foreshadowed the racial harmony of the Azusa revival, it was second-hand, as he never fully accepted the Pentecostal doctrine on speaking in tongues. Moreover, beginning in about 1901, as he began to adopt more and more unorthodox views, his ministry began to decline. He also became more and more isolationist, even fulfilling his dream of building a city, Zion, outside of Chicago, in which only “born-again” Christians could live. By 1905, the city

he had founded was taken from him, as was his ministry. He died not long after, in March, 1907, when the Pentecostal movement was just beginning to have a national reach. During his ministry, though, he had a direct impact on many who would become prominent Pentecostal leaders, chief among them Charles Fox Parham, considered by many to be the “Father of the Pentecostal Movement,” and possibly also on William Seymour, the leader of the Azusa Street Revival, who lived for a short time in Chicago.²¹

The Birth of the Pentecostal Movement

While most aspects of Pentecostalism are seen in earlier Christianity, particularly in the Holiness and Keswick movements, Pentecostals are generally distinguished from previous movements by the belief that “speaking in tongues” is “The initial physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.”²² This teaching was first begun in 1900 by Charles F. Parham, who was then leading a small ministry school called Bethel Bible College, in Topeka, Kansas.²³ Parham was a Holiness preacher who had left the Methodist denomination in 1895, following the denominations crackdown against the doctrine of holiness. For a short time he preached in various Holiness churches until, through illness, he felt called to begin a new ministry focusing on salvation and divine healing. In 1898, he opened the Bethel Healing Home to carry out this call, but when he was forced out of this location, he moved to another building in Topeka and also started a ministry training school, Bethel Bible College, on October 15, 1900. At the school, Parham taught verse by verse and by December had reached the book of Acts. It was here that, according to his own testimony, he assigned his students the task of searching for the evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts and assigned them to report on their findings. Both he and the approximately 36 students at the school concluded that

speaking in tongues was the unifying Biblical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Then, during the New Year's prayer service, on January 1, 1901, Agnes Ozman, one of the students at Bethel, asked Parham to lay his hands on her, and she subsequently experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues. As Parham described the encounter, "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 in the Chinese language, and was unable to speak in English for three days."²⁴ Just a few days later, several other students, as well as Parham himself, also received the baptism, evidenced by the phenomenon of speaking in tongues. Though the experience of Agnes Ozman was by no means unique, the significance of this event was that this was the first time that the act of speaking in tongues was considered to be direct evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. It is for this reason that many Pentecostals, including William Seymour, who would lead the famed Azusa Street Revival, honor Parham as the Father of the Pentecostal movement.²⁵ Besides his local influence at the school, Parham also published a biweekly newsletter called the *Apostolic Faith* and also went on some preaching tours. By 1905, he had begun a school in Houston, where he encountered his most famous student, William J. Seymour.

Seymour, a son of former slaves, was involved with the Holiness movement well before arriving in Houston. Before Parham had come to Houston, and while he was maintaining the Bethel School in Kansas, Lucy Farrow, the pastor of the small church Seymour was attending, left Houston to serve as a governess for the Parham family in Topeka. During Farrow's absence, Seymour served as the interim pastor. It was also during this time, that Seymour first came into contact with Parham's Pentecostal doctrine.

During Farrow's time serving the Parham family, she evidently received the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of tongues. Then, through correspondence with Farrow, Seymour also became convinced of the necessity of speaking in tongues and doctrinally accepted Holy Spirit baptism as "a third work of grace," though he did not actually experience this baptism until much later.²⁶ Just a little bit after that event, Parham moved his school and ministry headquarters to Houston, and Seymour asked to attend Parham's school.²⁷ Though Parham hesitated at first, due to Jim Crow laws (as well as his own apprehensions), he allowed Seymour to attend, though he was not allowed to sit with the other white students; instead, Seymour would sit outside the classroom listening through the cracked door.²⁸ Then, in January 1906, Seymour received an invitation to share the new Pentecostal doctrine in Los Angeles. Though Parham wanted Seymour to remain in Houston (likely because he had aspirations for Seymour preaching the Pentecostal doctrine among the blacks in Houston, while Parham preached to the whites), Seymour was insistent. In a show of support for the trip, Parham laid his hands on Seymour and commissioned him to go.²⁹ It was this trip to Los Angeles that eventually became the Azusa Street revival, the event that magnified immeasurably the effect of Parham and his Holy Spirit doctrine and which sparked a worldwide Christian movement.

Other Transitional Leaders in the Movement

Besides Charles Parham and William Seymour, who are seen as the father and the catalyst of the Pentecostal movement, respectively, there were several other figures in the Holiness movement at the turn of the century who later became influential in Pentecostalism. One of the participants in the "first outpouring of the Holy Ghost" at Topeka in 1901 was J. Roswell Flower, who later opened the second Pentecostal mission

after Parham's model in Lawrence, Kansas.³⁰ When the General Council of the Assemblies of God was formed in 1914, he was elected as its first General Secretary. Another Pentecostal figure who worked with Parham was W. Faye Carothers. Carothers received the Holy Spirit baptism in 1906 and became Parham's assistant in Houston. During this time, he also became the director of the Texas region for Parham's Apostolic Faith movement. He enforced segregation even more strictly than did Parham, who merely conformed to the Jim Crow laws of the South.³¹ Ironically, though, Carothers split with Parham in 1907, after Parham's denunciation of the Azusa Street revival, and even invited Seymour to be a guest speaker at his Brunner Pentecostal Tabernacle in Houston several years later.³² Thus, with Carothers, we see that not just the Holiness-Pentecostal movement as a whole, but even individuals within those movements had paradoxical views on racial integration.

Some of the African American leaders within the Holiness movement who later encountered Pentecost were Charles Price Jones and Charles Harrison Mason, both leaders of the holiness Church of God in Christ denomination. In 1907, Mason went on an investigative mission to Azusa Street and received the Pentecostal baptism. Upon returning to his headquarters in Memphis, however, he was met with some opposition. The denomination split in 1907, with C.P. Jones and the majority of the denomination rejecting the Pentecostal doctrine. Mason went on to become a major Pentecostal leader, using the Church of God in Christ denomination as an organizational covering for many Pentecostal evangelists and preachers, both black and white.³³

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored some of the foundations of the American Pentecostal movement. While the Pentecostal emphasis on supernatural experiences is part of a thread that traces its way from the beginning of Christianity through a variety of small, usually isolated, movements within Christendom, its heritage is directly linked with the Holiness movement in America. Not only did the Holiness movement provide a theological foundation out of which Pentecostal belief grew, but a majority of Pentecostals were converts from the Holiness movement. This also included several entire denominations, as well. For this reason, armed with an understanding of the religious context and heritage of Pentecostalism, we can proceed with an investigation of Pentecostalism and race relations in the budding of the movement: the Azusa Street revival, beginning in 1906.

Notes

¹Adam Rutherford, *Treatise on Bible Chronology*, (London: C. Tinling & Co., Ltd., 1957), 511. Though the exact year for this is uncertain, the Bible records the event happening on the Jewish festival of Pentecost which occurs annually fifty days after the Passover observance, the festival before which Jesus was executed in the same year (John 18:28, 19:31). Thus, this occurred about seven weeks after Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension.

²See also Acts 1:4,5; Luke 24:49.

³Acts 2:2-4.

⁴Acts 1:8.

⁵Acts 4:31.

⁶See Acts 10:46, 19:6, I Corinthians 12-14.

⁷David Barrett, "Appendix: A Chronology of Renewal in the Holy Spirit," in *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal, 1901-2001*, ed. Vinson Synan, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), 416.

⁸Roberts Liardon, *The Azusa Street Revival: When the Fire Fell*, (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, 2006), 18-19.

⁹Ibid, 18-20.

¹⁰Ibid, 21.

¹¹Qtd. in Liardon, *The Azusa Street Revival*, 28.

¹²Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), xi.

¹³Ibid, 6.

¹⁴Vinson 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 Publishers, 2001), 26.

¹⁵Ibid, 29-30.

¹⁶Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 34-43.

¹⁷Larry Martin, *The Life and Ministry of William J. Seymour*, (Joplin, MO: Christian Life Books, 1999), 72.

¹⁸Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971), 166.

¹⁹Martin, *The Life and Ministry*, 75.

²⁰Grant Wacker, "Marching to Zion: Religion in a Modern Utopian Community," *Church History* 54 (1985): 504.

²¹Edith L. Blumhofer, "The Christian Catholic Church And The Apostolic Faith: A Study In The 1906 Pentecostal Revival" (paper presented at 12th annual meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, Pasadena, CA, November 19, 1982).

²²The General Council of the Assemblies of God, "16 Fundamental Truths of the Assemblies of God," http://ag.org/top/Beliefs/Statement_of_Fundamental_Truths/sft_full.cfm#8. While this exact wording is excerpted from the Assemblies of God doctrinal statement, this belief is shared by virtually all Pentecostal denominations. Cf. "The Doctrines of the Church of God in Christ," <http://www.cogic.org/dctrn.htm>; "Declaration of Faith," Church of God (Cleveland, TN), http://www.churchofgod.cc/about/declaration_of_faith.cfm; and "The Gift of the Holy Ghost," United Pentecostal Church International, <http://www.upci.org/doctrine/holyGhost.asp>.

²³Robert Owens, "The Azusa Street Revival: The Pentecostal Movement Begins in America," in *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal, 1901-2001*, ed. Vinson Synan, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), 42-45.

²⁴Qtd. in Liardon, *The Azusa Street Revival*, 74.

²⁵Liardon, *The Azusa Street Revival*, 63.

²⁶Martin, *The Life and Ministry*, 91, 89-91.

²⁷Arthur E. Paris, *Black Pentecostalism: Southern Religion in an Urban World*, (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1982), 23.

²⁸Larry E. Martin, "Charles Fox Parham: Father of the Twentieth Century Pentecostal Revival," in *The Topeka Outpouring of 1901: 100th Anniversary Edition: Eyewitness Accounts of the Dramatic Revival that Started the Modern Pentecostal Movement*, ed. Larry Martin, (Joplin, MO: Christian Life Books, 2000), 27.

²⁹Liardon, *The Azusa Street Revival*, 79.

³⁰Larry Martin, *The Topeka Outpouring*, 171-175.

³¹James R. Goff, Jr., *Fields White Unto Harvest: Charles F. Parham and the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism*, (Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 1988), 108-110.

³²Goff, *Fields White Unto Harvest*, 228

³³Robert Owens, "The Azusa Street Revival," 65-66.

CHAPTER THREE

William Seymour and Initial Integration at Azusa Street

In the early months of 1906, one could sense in the religious community in Los Angeles the anticipation that something was about to happen that was going to shake the world. Several groups from various churches had been gathering around the city, praying for what they believed was a coming revival. Especially with reports from a concurrent national revival in Wales, “where from September 1904 to June 1905, 100,000 people were converted to Christ,” these praying groups carried a high level of expectancy that something earth-shattering was on the horizon.¹ With the coming of spring, this anticipation was realized, in more ways than one. On Wednesday, April 18, 1906, a great earthquake shook San Francisco, causing mass devastation; its tremors were felt as far away as Los Angeles. More significant, the symbolic gravity of this event seemed to herald in another type of “shaking” that had begun to germinate just a few days before at an ongoing prayer meeting established at 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles.

Consequently, when William Seymour arrived in Los Angeles a couple months earlier from Houston, in late February, 1906, bringing with him Charles Parham’s doctrine of Pentecost and the spiritual gift of “speaking in tongues,” the atmosphere was already ripe for change—though perhaps no one could fully anticipate the religious awakening that would eventually ensue or the subsequent worldwide movement that would bloom from it. Though Seymour’s Pentecostal message initially was welcomed with a padlocked church door, it eventually started a series of revival meetings that lasted for several years. More importantly, it drew people from all over the country, igniting a movement of

Pentecostalism that has considerably changed the religious landscape of America and, even more so, of how Christianity is practiced around the world.²

Though Seymour was merely one man sent out from Parham's Bible school—and Parham had been propagating the Pentecostal message since 1901—the revival at Azusa Street in Los Angeles suddenly became the center of the rapidly growing Pentecostal revivalist movement. As reports were published about the happenings at Azusa—either through their own newsletter, the *Apostolic Faith*, or through other newspaper reports—people from all over the United States, indeed from all over the world, came to Azusa Street to see for themselves the things happening there and to experience the revival meetings. From there they would return home to spread the message of Pentecost to the rest of the world.³

This chapter will first overview the development of the revival from its beginnings as a small prayer meeting to a continuous series of meetings that attracted people from all over America and beyond. Next, I will look at the life of William Seymour, the leader of the revival meetings, as well as the foremost proponent of the biracial impulse that characterized the revival. The final section of this chapter will examine and critique Seymour's rhetoric, specifically that rhetoric which served to create an environment of racial unity in the early Azusa Street Revivals.

Development of the Azusa Street Revival

When William Seymour arrived in Los Angeles on February 22, 1906, there were already several groups anticipating a supernatural, momentous act of God. Many of these were part of the Holiness or Keswick movements, both of which were revivalistic in nature. Many of these groups, through connections to similar groups in Great Britain

were also receiving reports of the revival in Wales. However, large-scale revival by no means occurred as soon as he arrived. In fact, he was barred from preaching at the one church to which he had been invited to minister, and that was his only contact in the city. Nonetheless, he did find hospitality in the home of Edward S. Lee, and began to hold small prayer meetings with Lee and anyone else who would come. In this way, Seymour was, in effect, joining with those who had already been praying for months for revival to come. He also continued his teaching on the doctrine of speaking in tongues and the experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, though he had not yet personally experienced it.⁴

As the days and weeks wore on, the prayer meetings continued. During this time, more people were joining the small prayer group and a couple of people saw supernatural visions and had other spiritual experiences, such as shaking violently “under the power” and falling to the floor, but the sign of speaking of tongues—which, according to Pentecostal doctrine, is what identifies Holy Spirit baptism—was yet to appear. Finally, after a few days of fasting and the arrival of two more workers from Houston—Joseph A. Warren and Lucy F. Farrow—Pentecost came to Los Angeles. On April 9, 1906, as Seymour laid his hands on him in prayer, Edward Lee began to speak in an unknown language. Then, later that evening at the prayer meeting at 214 Bonnie Brae Street, a woman named Jennie Moore felt as if “a vessel broke within [her] and water surged up through [her] being,” and she began speaking in tongues, just as Seymour had been preaching.⁵ Moreover, she also walked over to a piano in the room and “played the instrument while singing in tongues,” though she had never played the piano before.⁶ Following this experience, it is reported that several at the meeting fell into trances for up

to five hours, while others ran into the front yard of the house, speaking in tongues. This scene caused such a large crowd of curious neighbors—both black and white—that it was difficult to get near the house. People were at the house continually for the next three days, and, in keeping with the biblical account of Pentecost in the book of Acts, hundreds were converted, while several more were instantly healed and/or received the Pentecostal experience for themselves. Then, early in the morning on the third day of these extraordinary happenings, Seymour himself experienced Pentecost and the phenomenon of speaking in unknown tongues.⁷ For Seymour, these three days in April, 1906, marked “[t]he beginning of the Pentecost.”⁸

A few days later, to accommodate the crowds, the revival moved from 214 Bonnie Brae Street to a simple two-story structure at 312 Azusa Street, thus giving the revival its name. By the time of the first meeting at the new location, about 100 people had joined together in seeking God, or at least as onlookers.⁹ Though it began in a living room with a group of about a dozen, mostly poor, African American Christians meeting together for prayer, the racial diversity as well as the number of positive testimonies of salvation, healing, and Holy Spirit baptism increased as more and more people came to the meetings.

What began as a congregation of “colored people of the city of Los Angeles” quickly grew into a revival too large for just one race and one city.¹⁰ Mrs. May Evans, who would later serve on the administrative board of the Azusa Street Mission, was the first white person to experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the expression of speaking in tongues. “Since then,” Seymour wrote, “multitudes have come. God makes no difference in nationality, Ethiopians, Chinese, Indians, Mexicans, and other nationalities worship together.”¹¹ Besides crossing the racial divide, in the strict sense of

joining blacks and whites, Pentecost brought together people from all nations, ethnicities, and social classes. One *Los Angeles Times* article from 1906 described “a queer mixture of rich and poor,” including a “dignified mining man, well dressed and well groomed” testifying in the little shack located in a poor area of town.¹² In the early part of the movement, many thought the gift of tongues functioned primarily to enable missionaries to evangelize remote tribes, or anyone speaking a different language than the missionary. Because evangelism was such a high priority for those who would join the movement, the gift of tongues seemed a valuable tool to speed up the process of world evangelization. For example, a story is told how, in 1906, an American was speaking and writing in an unknown language when a visitor from India was brought into contact with him. As it turned out, the American was actually speaking the Indian’s native language, leading to the conversion of the Indian man. This was then followed by the man’s own baptism in the Holy Spirit, resulting in the gift of tongues in English (a language which he barely knew prior to this supernatural encounter). According to the witness of the story, the young Indian man was planning on returning to his native land to evangelize there.¹³

After the first month of meetings at Azusa Street, up to 1300 people would come to the meetings, with the mass of people spilling out onto the sidewalk. At the height of the revival, services were being held three times daily, throughout the entire week, with the masses crowding into the small two-story building and hundreds more waiting outside, unable to enter the mission.¹⁴ By September 1906, only five months after the beginning of the revival, the *Apostolic Faith* reported that “some 13,000 people [had] received” the Pentecostal experience.¹⁵ Also, the January, 1907, issue of the *Apostolic Faith* proudly reported that “the good tidings has spread in two hemispheres.”¹⁶ This tremendous

growth notwithstanding, the meetings remained informal and the revival was able to sustain its organic, less structured character. Though there were three daily services, it seemed as if one would generally mesh into the other, thus creating one continuous meeting that, according to one attendee, “would continue from morning till late at night without stopping.”¹⁷ Moreover, the design of this simple building was surely different than the neo-Gothic style that was popular for church buildings of the day. Rather, this mission was decorated with “[d]ozens of canes, braces, crutches and blackened smoking pipes [that] leaned against the barnlike walls.” These were all evidence of the supernatural healings—both from physical disease and from what the Pentecostals considered sinful vices—that occurred in the Azusa Street meeting place.¹⁸ Also, the second floor doubled as Seymour’s living quarters, as well as a prayer room, mirroring the “upper room” where the baptism of the Holy Spirit occurred during the first Christian celebration of Pentecost.¹⁹ Finally, the building lacked a raised platform. Instead, the makeshift benches were arranged all facing the center, which reflected the group’s sense of equality and the expectation that everyone would be involved in the services.²⁰

A. C. Valdez, an early convert to Pentecostalism, writes regarding his first experience at the Azusa Street revival that Seymour would sit “behind two wooden boxes, one on top of the other. They were his pulpit. Now and then he would raise his head and sit erectly, his large lips moving in silent prayer.” He continues, “He [Seymour] didn’t seem like a leader to me, but when I saw what was going on, I knew he didn’t have to be.”²¹ And unlike most Protestant churches where the sermon is central, prayer was the focus of these meetings, with the congregation kneeling several times each service, praying for various needs. Some would also prophesy, meaning that they spoke a

message they had received from God, while others would give testimonies of miracles and supernatural experiences that had happened earlier.²²

While the exact direction of the meetings was never predictable, one thing was sure: the meetings would evoke a definite response, positive or negative, from those investigating the revival for the first time. In particular, the interracial character of the meetings was seen as both a boon and a bane to the revival, depending on the visitor's perspective. Some people, including Seymour himself, viewed this counter-cultural unity as direct evidence of the work of God in the people, while others viewed this racial "mixing" as scandalous, even anti-biblical. The interracial character of the meetings was sure to evoke at least some response from those who visited, either positive or negative. Typical of the response of those who had become part of the movement is this description of the Azusa Street meetings: "The sweetest thing of all is the loving harmony. Every church where this has gone is like a part of the family."²³ Etta Auringer Huff, another believer in the Pentecostal movement described its development in this way: "I never expected to see such a sight on this earth. This work began with some poor ignorant, colored people (what more appropriate instruments could God choose?) and has spread until some of the educated, refined and intelligent white people are filled with the Holy Ghost and have received other languages, etc."²⁴ These are just two examples of Pentecostals' rejoicing over the fact that the "color line" had "been washed away" and that, as Huff exults, "Christian people are gathering together in one place in the central part of the city regardless of creed or color."²⁵ Hence, those who eventually were receptive to the experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit would generally speak of the anti-Jim Crow nature of the meetings in glowing, positive terms. In fact, it can be argued, as historians

Iain MacRobert and Walter Hollenweger do, that racial unity was a central feature of the early Pentecostal meetings in Los Angeles.²⁶

In stark contrast were many of the outsiders' criticisms of the meetings. Sometimes the most virulent of the attacks against the Pentecostals would be launched by religious leaders. While some launched their attack against Pentecostalism, others would go to the meetings intending to garner evidence against the movement but experience a sudden change of heart while sitting in the meeting. However, many remained opposed to what was happening. An example of these negative reports comes from the *Los Angeles Times*: "Sacred tenets, reverently mentioned by the orthodox believer, are dealt with in a familiar, if not irreverent, manner by these latest religionists." The writer then went on to caricature the "You-oo-oo gou-loo-loo come under the bloo-oo-oo boo-loo" sound of an older woman speaking in tongues, calling it "the strangest harange (*sic*) ever uttered."²⁷ Even worse was the claim by one Holiness leader that the movement was "satanic."²⁸

Generally, disparaging reports of the revival also focused on either the inter-racial nature of the revival or the "black-ness" of some of its leaders and participants. For example, one critic derided the scene of "a colored woman [with] her arms around a white man's neck, praying for him" as evidence of the scandal and vice within the movement.²⁹ Moreover, critics were sure to label Seymour as a "colored man," and newspaper reports derided his physical characteristics, calling him "greasy-looking" and a "one-eyed negro."³⁰ Some religious critics also used the theology that "colored people are the descendants of Ham," and subsequently claimed that "the devil [chose] one of the sons of Ham to launch out the Tongues of so-called Pentecostal movement."³¹

Despite these criticisms and the sensational reports of the newspapers, the movement continued to grow. In fact, the deriding reports were used as free advertising. Summarizing the Pentecostal response to outside criticism is this account of a supernatural vision one of the brothers had seen:

Before the fire broke out in Los Angeles a brother had a vision of fires springing up and then gathering together and advancing in a solid wall of flame. A preacher was trying to put it out with a wet gunny sack, but it was evident there was no use fighting it. Our God marches on. Hallelujah. The man with the wet gunny sack is here also, but his efforts only call attention to the fire.³²

Thus, the Pentecostals retained a sense of spiritual victory over their adversaries, while at the same time not lowering themselves to the fight. Even as these attacks were launched, the movement grew and the Azusa Street mission began to focus more outward. By October 1906, several missionaries were being sent out across the globe, and an issue of the *Apostolic Faith* from that time mentions people being sent out to West Africa and Jerusalem to propagate the Pentecostal message.³³ By November of the same year, the *Apostolic Faith* glowingly reported that three Pentecostal missions had been established in the city of Los Angeles, though the Azusa Street Mission certainly remained as the epicenter of the movement.³⁴

Finally, one of the most significant aspects of the Los Angeles revival at the beginning of this century was the overarching sense of unity and of humility. The various missions in Los Angeles receptive to the early Pentecostal revival and those established as a result of the revival would meet together weekly “for prayer and counsel.”³⁵ For those at the mission, the revival was beyond themselves. It was a sovereign move of God, bigger than the mission, and bigger than Los Angeles. Strengthening this resolve, one

translation of a message in tongues was interpreted as saying that God “recognizes no flesh, no color, no names. We must not glory in Azusa Mission, nor in anything. . . .”³⁶

These descriptions of the genesis of early Pentecostal movement beg the question: How did this happen? How was the sense of unity between African and European Americans generated in such a counter-cultural context—or, to borrow the phrase, how was this “color line” broken? Though those directly affected by the revival characterized this as a sovereign act of God, much of the interracial unity can be attributed to the influence of Seymour. Or, as a Pentecostal would put it (and perhaps more accurately), it was the influence of the Holy Spirit moving through Seymour.

Seymour Background

Born May 2, 1870, in Centerville, Louisiana, just five years after the American Civil War, William Joseph Seymour grew up in a segregated, racially antagonistic South.³⁷ Though not much is known of his childhood, we do know that both his parents were ex-slaves. Growing up as an African American in the South during the Reconstruction Era, his opportunities for education and employment were limited; and, even as an adult, it was said he had difficulty reading. Seymour was born into a family with a “long Roman Catholic tradition,” though the devotion of his family and the extent to which the Roman Catholic Church had an effect on his life is not known.³⁸ There is even some ambiguity relating to this, as some scholars assert that Seymour was raised as a Baptist. However, this is due primarily to the fact that his mother, Phillis Seymour, was a member of a Baptist church later in life. We are not sure what church the Seymour family attended during William Seymour’s upbringing. Thus, while the exact details on

Seymour's earliest experiences with organized religion are lost, we do know that he grew up in a family at least affected by the Christian tradition.

Though conditions in the South often led to bitterness and resentment among the African American population, this does not seem to be evident in the life of William Seymour. Like many others, he did leave the South sometime either during his teenage years or early twenties to search for better opportunity in the Northern states. Leaving southern Louisiana, Seymour traveled through Memphis to St. Louis, where he worked as a bartender, before landing in Indianapolis, at the age of 25.³⁹ It is in Indianapolis that we find Seymour's first record of church membership. There, he was a member of the Simpson Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church that, while populated only by African Americans, was part of an interracial denomination.⁴⁰ This was the beginning of Seymour's return to "the fold" of the church, as well as his growing commitment to racial unity. In fact, it has been argued that Seymour chose to join this particular church specifically because of its at least moderate sense of racial unity. After all, there was another African American church that met several blocks closer to his home.

Within a year, Seymour's pilgrimage continued as he moved on to Cincinnati, Ohio. While Seymour probably moved to Cincinnati to find continued employment as a waiter, it was during this time in his life that he encountered his destiny. In Cincinnati, he joined a group known as the Evening Light Saints, led by Martin Wells Knapp. This was most likely Seymour's first contact with the Holiness movement, and it was also while in Cincinnati that he first felt "his call to the ministry."⁴¹ Like in many other evangelical denominations, most Holiness preachers—and later ministers within the Pentecostal movement—believe that being a Christian minister, whether itinerant or as pastor of a

local congregation, is not merely a career that one chooses, but rather a vocation to which one is called. This act of being chosen, or the “call to the ministry,” is oftentimes accompanied by a dramatic experience. Seymour was no exception.

In 1902 the smallpox epidemic invaded Cincinnati. For 21 days, Seymour personally battled the disease. During his bout with smallpox, it was not only sickness he was battling, but he also experienced a battle of the will. Earlier, he experienced what he felt was his call to Christian ministry, yet he was unwilling to answer that “call.” For three weeks the battle ensued, until finally the smallpox fever mysteriously broke. He emerged from his sickbed battered from disease and willing to accept God’s “call.”⁴² Soon after, the Evening Light Saints credentialed Seymour as a Holiness minister.⁴³

By the end of the year, Seymour had moved on from Cincinnati, as well, but his life had been considerably impacted during his short tenure in that city. Not only was Cincinnati where he decided to accept his call to full-time Christian ministry, it was also where he received the experience of “sanctification” and became part of the Holiness movement, a move that would prove a stepping stone to his becoming a major leader within Pentecostalism. It was with the Evening Light Saints that Seymour “prayed until he testified to being wholly sanctified,” thus having the post-salvation, second experience that characterized members of the Holiness movement.⁴⁴ Besides incorporating Seymour into the Holiness movement, the Evening Lights Saints were also known for their sense of unity, particularly between the races. Moreover, unlike other groups, even the leadership of the Evening Light Saints was biracial. Though the movement was mostly white, there were 30 African American leaders by 1900, and this was particularly appealing to Seymour.⁴⁵ In fact, some historians argue that Seymour left Indianapolis partially due to

racial prejudice and his dissatisfaction with the growing color divide within the Methodist Episcopal church there.⁴⁶ In summarizing the movement, B. Scott Lewis writes that the Evening Light Saints strived to be “a church free of race, gender, age, and sect discrimination, with all members unified in the Spirit.”⁴⁷ For its time, the movement embraced some radical ideals and their effect on Seymour’s model of Christianity was definitely profound.

The effect of this movement of Seymour’s life can be seen not only in his call for interracial unity within Christianity, but also in other areas. For example, through the remainder of his life Seymour abided by the movement’s strict guidelines for a holy lifestyle, which included refraining from tea and coffee, professional entertainment, and even the wearing of neckties.⁴⁸ These were all considered unnecessary vanities—worldly distractions from a Christian’s intended focus on heaven and the coming Kingdom of God. Thus, the life-shifting effects of his encounter in Cincinnati with the Evening Light Saints would linger for the remainder of his life.

After Cincinnati, we are not sure where his journey continued for the next two to three years, though it is possible that he was living in Columbus, Ohio, probably working as a traveling salesman. He also made a side trip toward the end of 1904 to Jackson, Mississippi, where he met with the aforementioned Elder C. P. Jones, who was the overseer of the Church of God in Christ, one of the main (and a primarily African American) Holiness associations.⁴⁹ Shortly after this trip, Seymour made his way to Houston to search out some lost family members.⁵⁰

Though Seymour may or may not have found his estranged relatives during his tenure in Houston, he did have one meeting, or “divine appointment,” as some have called

it, which was to inaugurate his role as a pioneer in modern Pentecostalism. It was in Houston where he met Charles Fox Parham and encountered his message of the Pentecostal baptism and the accompanying evidence of speaking in an unknown tongue. He met Parham through his pastor in Houston, Lucy Farrow, who worked as a governess for the Parham family. In Houston, he was forced to endure strict segregation, not even being allowed to join with the white students in Parham's classroom, instead being forced to listen from outside through the cracked door. Nonetheless, he sat under Parham's teaching until he was called to Los Angeles to share the message of Pentecost at a small Holiness mission there. Ironically, Seymour himself had not experienced the phenomenon of speaking in tongues before he went on this trip, probably due—at least in part—to the fact that he was not allowed to “tarry at the altar” with his white fellow Christians, and thus was cut off from the corporate seeking of the Holy Spirit.⁵¹

The Rhetoric of William Seymour

While the interracial nature of the Azusa Street meetings was certainly not the norm, Seymour was surely not alone in his pursuit for reconciliation across the racial divide. It follows, then, that Seymour's rhetoric advocating unity should not be seen in isolation. Furthermore—and this will be developed more fully in the next chapter—the man whom Seymour viewed as a father in Pentecostalism, Charles Parham, would definitely be characterized as racist, at least by today's standards. Thus, when looking at Seymour's integration rhetoric, this context of contrast should be kept in mind.

Pentecostals were not the only or first group to have interracial services, though it was definitely out of the ordinary. Earlier in his life, Seymour had been involved with two of these groups that promoted racial unity: the Methodist Episcopal Church and the

Evening Light Saints.⁵² Moreover, Seymour was not the only minister in Los Angeles who emphasized unity as essential to the Pentecost experience. Frank Bartleman, who was also involved in the Azusa Street revivals (including much work as a historian of the events that happened there), exhorted in one of his many gospel tracts, published in 1906, “Let us lay aside all carnal contentions and divisions, that separate us from each other and from God. If we are His [Christ’s] body, then we are ‘one body.’”⁵³ Moreover, he also shared Seymour’s awareness of the plight of African Americans, lamenting, “There seems to be little justice for those whom God had made with the black skin.”⁵⁴

Additionally, Seymour’s vision for unity, both racial and otherwise, was imparted to—or at least shared by—his ministry associates. Clara Lum, who served as editor of the Azusa Street’s monthly newsletter, the *Apostolic Faith* magazine, wrote to another Holiness-Pentecostal magazine, articulating their desire to “present to the world a spectacle of perfect love and unity among the brethren, not striving to surpass one another, but to help each to build up the kingdom of Christ.”⁵⁵ Regarding the influence of Parham, Seymour was able to fully recite his Bible school teachings, though, as we shall see later, he came to reject some of Parham’s views, especially his positions toward race.⁵⁶ A few years into the revival, he also significantly toned down his rhetoric on the centrality of tongues-speaking as evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, instead holding that the best evidence of Spirit baptism is a life of love.

An interesting aspect of Seymour’s rhetoric is his source material. Due to his emphasis on returning to scriptural living (and perhaps also because of his limited education), Seymour’s reading was most likely limited just to the Bible. For this reason, along with the fact that the Bible is seen by Pentecostals as the final authority in life and

that most of Seymour's extant material is his sermons, Bible passages inform most of his rhetoric. Whatever mandate he set for his local mission, he attempted to back up with a biblical precedent. For example, in describing the "prejudices and discrimination" of several of their "white brethren," he uses a biblical passage from Galatians. In this passage, Paul writes of a time when he felt it necessary to rebuke a fellow apostle, Peter, for discriminating, as a Jew, against Gentile believers. Thus, this provides the scriptural precedent for his own forthcoming rebuke. Furthermore, in describing the way African Americans in the congregation should respond to this discrimination, Seymour cites two passages, Matthew 17:8, and the entire 23rd chapter of Matthew. Interestingly, the first verse comes from a context unrelated to church unity, or even anything to do with race; rather, it comes from the account of the transfiguration of Jesus (when Jesus brought a few disciples up onto a mountainside, where Jesus temporarily traded his human form for a radiant one, while the ancient prophets Moses and Elijah appeared and talked with Jesus). The verse itself says, "When [the disciples] looked up, they saw no one except Jesus." Thus, it seems that Seymour's exhortation is for his congregation to focus on spiritual things—specifically, on Jesus—and to ignore acts of discrimination against them.

Regarding the second Scripture Seymour cites—Matthew 23—in prescribing the proper response to discrimination, this chapter is slightly less defusing than the verse from Matthew 17. The 23rd chapter of Matthew consists of Jesus' denunciation of the Jewish religious leaders of His day and his pronouncement of seven woes on them. While the rhetoric in this chapter can seem rather inflammatory (i.e., "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! . . . On the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness"), Jesus tempers his verbal

attack on the religious leaders by beginning with the forewarning that the Jewish followers are nonetheless obliged to “obey them and do everything they tell” them to do—that is, to honor their authorities, even when the authority is misused.⁵⁷

In another instance, Seymour preached a message titled “Rivers of Living Water.” In the sermon, he used the words of Jesus that he shared sitting near a well with a Samaritan woman.⁵⁸ Though Jesus broke the cultural taboo of his day by speaking with a Samaritan, interestingly Seymour did not use this opportunity to point out the racial integrationist aspect of this lesson.⁵⁹ Culturally, first-century Jewish attitudes toward Samaritans would most closely parallel early 20th-century white American attitudes toward African Americans. By talking to a Samaritan woman, Jesus defied the segregationist norms of his day. Though Seymour was not a scholar in first-century Jewish customs, the text Seymour quotes clearly points this out—“She answered, “How is it that thou being a Jew askest drink of me who am a woman of Samaria, for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans?”—but Seymour does not capitalize on this opportunity, nor even elaborate on the ethnic tension between Jews and Samaritans during the time Jesus walked the earth.⁶⁰

Even in his later application of the text, Seymour was by no means ignoring current trends. “There are so many people today like the woman,” Seymour began, using the Samaritan woman as an example of some of the mistakes of contemporary American Christians.⁶¹ As the sermon developed, though, it was clear that the issue was not race segregation, but rather that “many people today are worshipping in the mountains, big churches, stone and frame buildings.” Seymour used this story to teach against denominationalism, not segregation. This example, though just one sermon, is typical of

Seymour's general approach to the issue of race relations. Though it was for Seymour central to the full experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, racial unity was more often implied than an issue dealt with in an up-front way.

Arguably, one of the most significant impacts William Seymour made when it came to race relations was simply the way he organized the mission and conducted the revival services. While it has already been stated that the services themselves did not adhere to a strict structure, there was certainly a sense of decorum that was adhered to in the meetings. And Seymour apparently was not hesitant to correct congregants if he felt someone was acting in "the flesh."⁶² Specifically related to healing the racial divide, it was obvious from the meetings that there was no segregated seating, nor were the altars segregated. Though nonverbal, this was perhaps the strongest message Seymour ever "preached" on the importance of racial unification. Furthermore, the evident blessing of God on the meetings served to validate that message. In 1915, looking back at the development of the Azusa Street Mission and the Pentecostal movement, Seymour recalled, "Very soon division arose through some of our brethren, and the Holy Spirit was grieved." The message of unity was one that Seymour believed truly was important to God.

Besides merely having a desegregated congregation, Seymour would enlist "other good preachers, mostly white," to preach for him when he was away on evangelistic missions.⁶³ Whether or not Seymour made a conscious choice to use *white* preachers as the figurehead for the meetings when he was away, it was nonetheless an effective way to convey the message that the Azusa Mission was open to both races. Additionally, as Seymour organized the leadership of the Azusa Mission, he was very deliberate in

creating a leadership structure that was mixed both in terms of race and gender. For example, Clara Lum, a white female, served as editor of the *Apostolic Faith* paper. Also, the credentialing committee, which authorized evangelists and preachers sent out from the Apostolic Faith Movement in Los Angeles, consisted of eight white members and three black members.⁶⁴

Moreover, Seymour's continued use of Parham's name as an associative factor, if not deliberate rhetorical strategy, definitely had significant rhetorical implications. The association with Parham was also made clear in the earliest issues of the *Apostolic Faith* newsletter, which was the primary means of spreading the news about the revival in Los Angeles. In the inaugural issue, Parham is recorded as saying: "I rejoice in God over you all, my children, though I have never seen you; but since we know the Holy Spirit's power, we are baptised (*sic*) by one Spirit into one body. Keep together in unity until I come, then in a grand meeting let all prepare for the outside fields I desire, unless God directs to the contrary, to meet and see all who have the full Gospel when I come."⁶⁵ This published statement gave the Azusa Mission distinct advantages. The fact that Seymour had a "stamp of approval," so to speak, from the white "Projector of the Apostolic Faith" (as Parham referred to himself) not only lent credibility to the Azusa mission, but also helped disarm anyone who might dismiss the Los Angeles meetings as mere black emotionalism.

After Parham's utter denunciation of the Azusa Street revival, and of William Seymour—whom he had sent out—Seymour made what some say to be his "only reference . . . made to race": "You know, it is my color."⁶⁶ While the effect of Parham's dissociation with and denunciation of Seymour and the Azusa Street movement will be discussed in the following chapter, what is significant here is that it is, as far as modern

historians can tell, the only explicit reference Seymour made to the secondary status of blacks or to the race issue, in general. Thus, Seymour could never be accused of being “someone with an ax to grind.” Though his practice of racial integration was counter-cultural both for Americans and for the American Church, there was never any antagonism, either in his actions or in his speech. Because his focus was “not of this world,” he transcended the issue of racism, rather than directly protesting against it.⁶⁷ For Seymour, racial integration within the Church was not a political or societal issue, nor was it centrally about race; rather, it was an issue of the heart (or spirit). It is for that reason that baptism in the Holy Spirit and sanctification—a right relationship with God—were at the core of solving the problem of racism in new converts to Pentecost. Like Seymour’s approach to most issues, racial integration was an issue that was profoundly spiritual.

With this in mind, the fact that hardly any of his sermons or his (available) public statements during the height of the revival explicitly mentioned race and its problematic status in America is understood in that he used other, more implicit rhetorical means to address the issue. From a quantitative standpoint, race was certainly not a central aspect of his teaching. In fact, with direct regard to specific social issues, Seymour’s motto seemed to be, “The Spirit will tell you what to do,” or “everyone shall be taught of God from the least to the greatest;” thus, rarely do we find in his transcribed and published sermons any explicit address of the issue.⁶⁸ While we do not find any teaching specifically on the theme of race or institutionalized segregation, a look through the corpus of his extant sermons and writings will reveal one major theme: unity. In his document outlining *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission*, he writes the following: “Let us be deeply sensible (from what we have known)

of the evil of a division in principle, spirit or practice, and the dreadful consequences to ourselves and others. If we are united, what can stand before us? If we divide, we shall destroy ourselves, and the work of God, and the souls of our people (Gal. 5:15-17).”⁶⁹

Thus, by developing the theme of unity, especially in relation to the work of unity that the Holy Spirit performs in a Christian’s heart, he can address the root of the problem of racial division.

Seymour’s connection between spiritual unity and racial reconciliation is best demonstrated by this exhortation he gives to the members of the revival: “We find according to God’s Word to be one in the Holy Spirit, not in the flesh; but in the Holy Spirit, for we are one body (1 Corinthians 12:12-14).”⁷⁰ The verse he references says the following:

The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Now the body is not made up of one part but of many.

This verse demonstrates very clearly some of the implied results of being “one in the Holy Spirit.” Thus, in summary, Seymour’s message is this: *As one body baptized into the Holy Spirit, there is no more Jew or Greek, black or white, slave or free, rich or poor. The division is gone; we are one.*

Furthermore, this passage from Acts 2, popular among Pentecostals because it tells of the first experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, served as further Biblical precedent for his appeal to unity: “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.’ O beloved, there is where the secret is: one accord, one place, one heart, one soul, one mind, one prayer. If God can get a people anywhere in

one accord and in one place, of one heart, mind, and soul, believing for this great power, it will fall and Pentecostal results will follow.”⁷¹ Again, for Seymour, an atmosphere of deliberate unity was a prerequisite for seeing the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit in one’s life.

Conclusion

The revival that began among a small group of believers praying together in Los Angeles in the spring of 1906 was significant for several reasons. Not only did it ignite the Pentecostal movement, bringing the Holiness message to a new stage in its development, sending missionaries around the world, introducing spiritual phenomena that had been almost forgotten since the first century, and changing the religious landscape of America, it also served as a milestone in the healing of America’s prejudices and racial wounds. Of course, the overarching significance of the racial integration of the Church at the Los Angeles meetings would depend on whether or not Seymour’s message of unity was carried on to other local Pentecostal bodies, and whether or not those continuing the Pentecostal message would feel that the racial integration experienced at Azusa was worth the consequences of being counter-cultural in a Jim Crow world. In the remaining chapters, we will find out if Azusa’s potential significance for Christianity and race relations was realized.

Notes

¹Gary B. McGee, “William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival,” *Enrichment Journal* (Fall 1999), http://ag.org/enrichmentjournal/199904/026_azusa.cfm. See also Frank Bartleman, *Another Wave Rolls In!*, ed. John Walker (Monroeville, PA: Whitaker Books, 1962), 22-45. This book was originally published by Bartleman in 1925, under the title *What Really Happened at “Azusa Street?”*. The concurrent revival in Wales, primarily associated with Evan Roberts, was at its height from 1904 to 1906. With the Azusa Street revival beginning in 1906, many people attribute the Welsh revival as a sort of (at least spiritual) predecessor to the Pentecostal revival in the United States. For a brief overview on Roberts and the Welsh Revival, see Roberts Liardon, “Evan Roberts, ‘Welsh Revivalist,’” in *God’s Generals: Why They Succeeded and Some Failed* (Tulsa, OK: Albury Publishing, 1996), 77-106.

² For a survey of Pentecostalism and its global impact in the 20th Century, see Vinson Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2001).

³ Some of the early Pentecostal leaders who were affected by the meetings at Azusa Street include Ernest Williams, later superintendent of the Assemblies of God; C. H. Mason, who formed the Church of God in Christ; Frank Bartleman, whose publications helped form an early history of the movement; William H. Durham, a highly popular Chicagoan preacher who would later introduce the new “Finished Work” doctrine; A. G. Carr, successful missionary and revivalist; Glen Cook; and many others, including A. H. Argue, “R. E.” McAllister, Frank J. Ewart, Frank Small, A. G. Canda, Max Morehead, Harry Morse, and John Sinclair. See Ethel E. Goss, *The Winds of God: The Story of the Early Pentecostal Movement (1901-1914) in the Life of Howard A. Goss*, 2nd ed., edited by Ruth Goss Nortjé, (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1978), 72.

⁴ Larry Martin, *The Life and Ministry of William J. Seymour and a History of the Azusa Street Revival* (Joplin, MO: Christian Life Books, 1999), 139-142.

⁵ Jennie Moore; qtd. in Martin, *Life and Ministry*, 146.

⁶ Martin, *Life and Ministry*, 146.

⁷ Ibid, 146-149.

⁸ William Seymour, *Apostolic Faith*, September, 1906, 1.

⁹ Craig Borlase, *William Seymour: A Biography*, (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2006), 125.

¹⁰ William J. Seymour, *The Doctrines and Disciplines of the Azusa Street Apostolic faith Mission of Los Angeles, California*, ed. Larry Martin, (Joplin MO: Christian Life Books, 2000), 29.

¹¹ *Apostolic Faith*, September, 1906, 3.

¹²“Rolling and Diving Fanatics ‘Confess,’” *Los Angeles Times*, June 23, 1905, I7.

¹³ Etta Auringer Huff, “A Scriptural Pentecost,” *A Herald of Light*, July 14, 1906, in Larry Martin, ed., *Azusa Street: The True Believers Part 2*, (Joplin, MO: Christian Life Books, 1999), 104.

¹⁴ James Choung, “Let the Walls Come Down: William Seymour,” InterVarsity Ministry Exchange, <http://www.intervarsity.org/mx/item/4332> (Accessed April 21, 2007), 4; Borlase, *William Seymour*, 130.

¹⁵*Apostolic Faith*, September, 1906, 1.

¹⁶Florence Crawford, “Beginning of World Wide Revival,” *Apostolic Faith*, January, 1907, 1.

¹⁷Huff, “A Scriptural Pentecost,” 104.

¹⁸Qtd. in Larry Martin, ed., *Azusa Street: The True Believers Part 2* (Joplin, MO: Christian Life Books, 1999), 51.

¹⁹Cf. Acts 1:13,14: “And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room” where they “all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication.”

²⁰ Martin, *Life and Ministry*, 159.

²¹Qtd. in Larry Martin, ed., *Azusa Street: The True Believers Part 2*.

²²Martin, *Life and Ministry*, 180.

²³Qtd. in *Apostolic Faith*, November, 1906, 1.

²⁴ Huff, “A Scriptural Pentecost,” 104.

²⁵*Ibid*, 103.

²⁶“Not only did black and white meet in early Pentecostalism, but the meeting between black and white was at the root of the worldwide revival called Pentecostalism.” Walter J. Hollenweger, Foreword to *The Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism in the USA*, by Iain MacRobert (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1988), xii.

²⁷“Weird Babel Of Tongues: New Sect of Fanatics Is Breaking Loose; Wild Scene Last Night on Azusa Street; Gurgle of Wordless Talk by a Sister,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 18, 1906, page II-1.

²⁸White, *Demons and Tongues*, (Zarephath, NJ: Pillar of Fire Publishers, 1949).

²⁹*Ibid*, 72.

³⁰Ibid, 67; “Women with Men Embrace,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 3, 1906, I11. See also Rev. W. B. Godbey, “Tongues Movement—Satanic,” in Alma White, *Demons and Tongues*, 119-127.

³¹White, *Demons and Tongues*, 100-1.

³²*Apostolic Faith*, November, 1906.

³³*Apostolic Faith*, October, 1906.

³⁴*Apostolic Faith*, November, 1906, 4.

³⁵Crawford, “Beginning of World Wide Revival,” 1.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Martin, *Life and Ministry*, 31.

³⁸Ibid, 59, 53-59.

³⁹Ibid, 67-69.

⁴⁰Borlase, *William Seymour*, 47-48.

⁴¹Roberts Liardon, *The Azusa Street Revival: When the Fire Fell*, (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, 2006), 90.

⁴²Borlase, *William Seymour*, 1-6.

⁴³Martin, *Life and Ministry*, 80.

⁴⁴James S. Tinney, “William Seymour: Father of Modern-Day Pentecostalism,” in Randall K. Burkett and Richard Newman, eds. *Black Apostles: Afro-American Clergy Confront the Twentieth Century*, (Boston: G. K. Hall and Co., 1978), 216; qtd. in Martin, *The Life and Ministry*, 76.

⁴⁵Martin, *Life and Ministry*, 77.

⁴⁶B. Scott Lewis, “William J. Seymour: Follower of the ‘Evening Light,’” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 39, 2 (Fall 2004): 169-170.

⁴⁷Ibid, 181.

⁴⁸Martin, *Life and Ministry*, 79.

⁴⁹Ibid, 81.

⁵⁰Ibid, 88-89.

⁵¹Ibid, 93.

⁵²Lewis, “William J. Seymour: Follower of the ‘Evening Light,’” 171.

⁵³Frank Bartleman, Gospel Tract, June, 1906, qtd. in Larry Martin, ed., *The Words that Changed the World... Azusa Street Sermons*, (Joplin, MO: Christian Life Books, 1999), 119.

⁵⁴Qtd. in Martin, *Life and Ministry*, 120.

⁵⁵Qtd. in Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 127.

⁵⁶Martin, *Life and Ministry*, 93.

⁵⁷Matthew 23:27, 28; Matthew 23:3.

⁵⁸William J. Seymour, “River of Living Water,” *Apostolic Faith*, November, 1906, 2. For the original story, see John 4:1-26

⁵⁹Cf. John 4:9

⁶⁰Qtd. in Seymour, “River of Living Water,” 2.

⁶¹Seymour, “River of Living Water,” 2.

⁶²Martin, *Life and Ministry*, 189.

⁶³Martin, *True Believers*, 118.

⁶⁴Cf. Martin, *Life and Ministry*, 203.

⁶⁵*Apostolic Faith*, September, 1906.

⁶⁶Martin, *Life and Ministry*, 270.

⁶⁷Cf. John 8:23.

⁶⁸William J. Seymour, “In Money Matters,” November, 1906, in Larry Martin, ed., *The Words that Changed the World... Azusa Street Sermons*, (Joplin, MO: Christian Life Books, 1999), 36.

⁶⁹William J. Seymour, *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission of Los Angeles, California*, reprinted by Larry Martin, ed., (Joplin, MO: Christian Life Books, 1999).

⁷⁰Ibid, 30.

⁷¹William Seymour, “The Baptism of the Holy Ghost,” *Apostolic Faith*, May, 1908, 3.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Decline of the Azusa Street Revival and Its Impact on Pentecostal Race Relations

In the previous chapter, I examined the growth and impact of the Los Angeles revival at Azusa Street, particularly honing in on William Seymour's transcendent message of unity, which resulted in an unprecedented integration of all races in the middle of a segregated and racially stratified society. As the success of the Azusa Street meetings continued to grow, so did the scorn and persecution from outside sources, resulting in derisive editorial cartoons and stories in the major newspapers, denouncement by some established religious leaders, and even the arrest of some propagators of the message.¹ More detrimental, however, was the separation that began to occur from within the movement. While the revival meetings continued in their distinctive unity for several years, pressure from both without and within the movement began to wear on Seymour and others who were at the core of the revival, and a looming shadow began to form over the initially bright message of racial harmony from the early Azusa meetings.

Many of the visitors to the revival meetings came initially as skeptics—not just of the doctrine of Holy Spirit baptism, but also of the demonstrative physical expressions of worship and the close fellowship between black and white. However, there were many who were converted by the message of Pentecost and experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit for themselves, evidenced both by the supernatural outburst of language and the miraculous love for others. Many of these conversion testimonies also include a change of heart specifically regarding race relations. For instance, G.B. Cashwell, later known as “the Apostle of Pentecost to the South,” initially was repulsed by the thought of African

Americans laying hands on him to pray, but later repented and became involved in the Azusa revival.²

As we trace the history of the Azusa revival, though, there are hints of a concurrent larger trend moving in the opposite direction: while there were many newcomers to the revival who embraced racial integration for the first time, we also see that, as the revival progressed, some of the racial unity was being lost. While instances of outright racial severance were rare, there was a more subtle, unofficial re-segregation that occurred. As the movement grew and visitors brought the message back to their home churches or went out as missionaries to areas where the Pentecostal message had not yet been preached, the expansion seemed to come at the price of loss of racial unity. Even some doctrinal disputes, though not necessarily racially motivated, seemed to fall along racial lines. Finally, the Azusa Mission itself, which for about three years, from 1906 to 1908, was the hub of Pentecostal activity for both Los Angeles and the nation, began to decrease in prominence until, by 1914, the Azusa Mission was limited to Seymour and just a few other families, mostly those who were part of the original Bonnie Brae prayer meetings.³

While the subsequent chapters will focus on the development of Pentecostalism and the race relations on a national level, this chapter will trace the decline of the Azusa Street mission in prominence and the corresponding weakening of inter-racial unity. Scholars generally point to three factors that led to the decline of the Azusa Street revival and its loss of place as the center of the Pentecostal movement: Parham's denunciation of the movement in October 1906, the loss of two important leaders and a significant portion of the *Apostolic Faith* mailing list in the summer of 1908, and the introduction (and Seymour's rejection) of the "Finished Work" doctrine of sanctification by William

Durham in 1911.⁴ This chapter will examine these three factors, as well as examine Seymour's response to each of these challenges. Finally, there will also be an examination of other probable factors that contributed to the decline of the Azusa Street meetings, as well as their overall effect on race relations.

The First Attack—Charles Fox Parham

Though the workers at the Pentecostal mission at Azusa Street had, from their beginning, been accustomed to controversy—after all, Seymour's first preaching stint in Los Angeles ended with a padlocked church door—probably the most stinging denouncement of the revival came succinctly, with just six words: “God is sick at His stomach!”⁵ While this pronouncement of God's presumed disapproval was sufficiently harsh solely by the words themselves, the fact that this declaration came from the self-proclaimed “Projector of the Apostolic Faith Movement,” Charles Parham, made the rebuke even more hurtful.⁶

For months since the revival began, the worshippers at the Azusa Street mission had been looking forward to the arrival of their “father in the faith.”⁷ One visitor is recorded to have been looking forward to meeting the white Parham who was “father of the black son.”⁸ The inaugural edition of the *Apostolic Faith* newsletter reprinted a letter of support from Parham for the mission, with a promise that he would come and hold “a grand meeting” upon his arrival.⁹ During the early months of the revival, the Azusa Mission was closely linked with Parham's ministry; Seymour definitely saw himself as being a part of Parham's national work and the Los Angeles revival as being an extension of Parham's work began just over five years before, with the initial tongues-speaking experience in Topeka, Kansas.¹⁰

By the time of publication for the October newsletter, Parham had not yet arrived, but the anticipation of his arrival kept building. Recounting again the beginning and development of the Pentecostal movement, starting again in 1901 at Parham's Bible school, the *Apostolic Faith* editors had nothing but laudatory comments to bestow on their revered leader, Brother Parham: "He was surely raised up of God to be an apostle of the doctrine of Pentecost."¹¹ Since many of the attendees of the Los Angeles revival had never met Parham, the expectations were idealized, and Seymour definitely helped fuel this expectation:

Before another issue of this paper, we look for Bro. Parham in Los Angeles, a brother who is full of divine love and whom the Lord raised up five years ago to spread this truth. He, with other workers, will hold union revival meetings in Los Angeles and then expects to go on to other towns and cities. . . . So begin to prepare for a revival and a great and deep revival, too. . . . [P]repare for the Lord's coming.¹²

Things were going great at the Azusa Mission, and Parham's arrival was about to precipitate an even greater outpouring of the Spirit of God. Or so it was thought.

With all this anticipation leading up to Parham's visit in late October, one would expect an abundance of glowing reports from Parham's meetings in the subsequent month's newsletter. To the contrary, any reference to Parham, his arrival, or even the work in Houston was conspicuously absent. Perhaps Parham had not yet arrived? Actually, Parham had arrived by then, but his time at the Azusa Mission was anything but what had been envisioned in the months leading up to his visit. While Seymour and the others were expecting Parham's complete approval of the Lord's work in California and probably thought Parham would help usher in another stage of greater miraculous events and would increase the influence of the local Pentecostal movement there, this was anything but the case. At Parham's first visit to the mission in Los Angeles, he was not

pleased at what he saw occurring during the meeting—rather, “to say he was not pleased is a gross understatement.”¹³ Soon after he first arrived, even before being introduced, “Parham walked to the front of the mission, greeted Seymour and pronounced to those attending, ‘God is sick at His stomach!’”¹⁴ This was hardly the token of approval Seymour and the others were expecting. After all, it was Parham who had laid hands on Seymour, sending him off to Los Angeles in the first place. Seymour and the leaders of the mission looked to Parham as the father of the movement. Moreover, the Azusa Mission was among the premier places where people were hearing Parham’s doctrine of Holy Spirit baptism and the message was spreading like wildfire from that place throughout the city and around the world. Why, then, would “God [be] sick at His stomach”?

Though Parham did not immediately explain why God was apparently sick, his later accounts of the revival reveal the problems he found at the meeting. In later accounts, he derided the movement, this time with a more specific—and more explicitly racist—critique, describing people “laying across one another like hogs, blacks and whites mingling; this should be enough to bring a blush of shame to devils, let alone angels.”¹⁵ Also, according to the biography of one of Parham’s associates, Howard Goss, the original school in Houston began to hear reports of fanaticism and “fleshly manifestation,” which spurred a visit by Charles Parham. Goss reports that Parham’s advice went unheeded, however, as the leaders of the Azusa work “felt they had received a greater power in Los Angeles than had been known before.”¹⁶ Though the accuracy of Goss’s account is put into question by the *Apostolic Faith* reports prior to Parham’s coming, it does shed light at least on Parham’s attitude after leaving the Azusa Mission. Parham, it

seemed, was opposed to the very racial integration that Seymour cited as evidence of the unity of the Spirit.

While Parham decried the racial integration at Azusa Street, his racist ideology was more complex than a brief, superficial look might suggest. For instance, while he was opposed to the way Seymour was handling the meetings, he obviously was not completely opposed to Seymour, as a black man, being a Christian leader. After all, it was Parham who had sent Seymour to Los Angeles with his blessing and seal of approval in the first place. Neither was he opposed to ministering with African Americans, necessarily. For even earlier that year, Sister Lucy Farrow, a black woman, had returned to Texas to participate in a conference with the Apostolic Faith movement. There “she was received as a messenger of the Lord . . . even in the deep south of Texas,” and would lay hands on the people there, praying for them to receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, with the manifestation of speaking in tongues. The fact that she returned from Azusa Street and was well-received by the home base in Houston made Parham’s reaction upon arrival in Los Angeles even more surprising, though the text does not say whether she laid hands on both blacks and whites, or only on fellow African Americans.¹⁷ At the same time, it would be wrong to assume that she was received as equally as if she had been white. The fact that she began her relationship with the Parham family serving as their cook—a role typified as subservient in a stratified system—provides more evidence of this.

A review of some of Parham’s rhetoric, especially when explaining his doctrinal positions, yields some light regarding his disapproval of the Azusa Street revival. In overview, it must be said that Parham’s doctrine was anything but orthodox. His

commitment to glossolalia as the universal initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit demonstrated his willingness to deviate from accepted norms. Although much of his doctrine differed from what his religious contemporaries would deem orthodox, it simultaneously reflected a heavy influence of Southern racist ideology. His understanding of race and his commitment to keeping the “purity” of each race intact were unorthodox but highly relevant to our study of early Pentecostal race relations.

Ironically, Parham viewed himself as “an apostle of unity.”¹⁸ Moreover, in one of his printed sermons, he encouraged the readers to let nothing keep them “from loving every true child of God of whatsoever name, sect, or order they may be.”¹⁹ At first, this rhetoric seems to conflict with his actions in Los Angeles, as well as later actions that could be characterized as racist, but a closer look at his rhetoric reveals more about his conception of unity. Somehow, Parham still espoused unity and love, yet at the same time preached that blacks were basically second-class humans. The unity that Parham was preaching was most definitely not the all-inclusive (and racial) unity for which Seymour had a vision. We see this in a written sermon, titled “Unity,” originally published in 1902 as a chapter in a book, in which Parham described himself as *A Voice Crying in the Wilderness* (reflective of the biblical description of John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus Christ’s advent).²⁰ In his description of and call to Christian unity, there was a corresponding condemnation of what he described as a counterfeit unity. Parham’s felt need to bring up a sort of clash, or dichotomy, when discussing unity is telling. Particularly, for Parham, there was an inextricable link between holiness and Christian unity. As he wrote: “To be brought into Bible unity we must as certainly lay all our creeds, doctrines and teachings at Jesus’ feet, asking Him to cleanse them through it, take

them all . . . [as] when we sought His sanctifying power.”²¹ Again, he wrote that when Christians are purified “from all error and false teaching; it will bring us into unity.”²²

How then does this explain Parham’s outburst at Azusa? By his own standard, he was apparently “cleansing the church.” Parham’s worldview did not permit him to view race relations through the lens of his unity rhetoric. This is especially true considering that, among the “false teaching” he had purportedly been purified from is what others would consider to be the belief in the doctrine of *Imago Dei*, that man was created in the image of God. To the contrary, Parham read the first few chapters of Genesis differently, and his unorthodox theory of the creation of man supported his commitment to racial segregation. According to Parham’s theology, the primary race of humans was created on the sixth day of creation, while a second, Adamic race was formed (not created) from the dust of the earth on what he termed the “eighth day.” The created race of humans was in the image of God, but the Adamic race, being formed from dust, lacked the same prestige. Though this view does not directly explain his conception of black vs. white races (as we shall see later), his enthymematic reasoning for this view is significant. Parham’s purported biblical support for the dual-race nature of the earliest humans includes what he saw as a contrast between God’s command for man to “rule . . . over all the earth, and all the creatures” within it and what Parham viewed as a relegation for Adam to “work the ground.”²³ In Parham’s mind, manual labor and farm work were completely unbecoming one who had been granted authority to rule over the earth. Obviously, this was a reflection of the culture in which he lived, where blacks were limited primarily to work in the fields.²⁴

Interestingly, Parham's "eight day" theory of the formation of Adam nonetheless did not directly explain his distinction between the black and white races. In fact, Parham's archaeological narrative posits that the "created" race of man, made on the sixth day, was completely destroyed in the Great Flood. According to Parham, the great biblical Flood was a judgment of God spurred by the intermarriage between the two races of man, which he believed was demonstrated in Genesis 6:1-4. This passage describes how "sons of God"—those created on the sixth day—(wrongfully) married the "daughters of men"—those formed from dust on the eighth day—resulting in a race of men called the Nephilim. Though this is not interracial mixing in the same sense as black and white inter-marriage, in the sermon describing this theory, he applied this judgment as a warning against contemporary interracial mixing, claiming that "diseases would soon wipe the mixed bloods off the face of the earth," as a direct judgment of God.²⁵ Thus, for Parham, the divide between black and white was by no means something to be overcome; rather, according to Parham, this segregation was God-ordained.

Regarding the continuation of humankind, Noah and his family—who were descendants of Adam and Eve—were the only ones spared, and this was only because God had made a covenant with Adam, promising a soon-to-come Redeemer. All of those descended from the man created on the sixth day were completely destroyed.²⁶ Further developing this story, Parham claimed that Noah was chosen "not only because he was a just man," as the account in Genesis describes, but also because—unlike others of his generation—his was "a pedigree without mixed blood in it" (i.e., not inter-racial).²⁷

Thus, according to Parham's narrative, humanity was once again racially pure following the Flood. Where then does Parham derive the distinction between whites and

blacks in early 20th Century America? If we all share the common ancestor of Noah, why should the various “races” remain separate? Parham explained the current racial make-up through a variety of convoluted genealogies and histories. He determined that the white Anglo-Saxons in America, as well as “the Hindus (*sic*), the Japanese, the high German, the Danes (tribe of Dan), the Scandinavians . . .” were actually part of the ten lost tribes of Israel, while the Gentiles were comprised of “the Russians, the Greek, the Italian, the low German, the French, [and] the Spanish”—basically all nations dominated by non-Protestant Christianity.²⁸ Then, a third category, the “heathen,” was made up of “the Black race, the Brown race, the Red race, [and] the Yellow race.” He determined this through a variety of pseudo-historical means, but it seems the most compelling “evidence” for his theory was God’s promise that Israel be “the head and not the tail of nations.”²⁹ Thus, his historical view was predominately guided by the current industrial and imperialistic success of contemporary nations. While the heathen, he believed, would “be given to Jesus for an inheritance” and could receive Christianity, it was nonetheless the descendants of Abraham (which included the Anglo-Saxons) who were biblically ordained as superior.³⁰

Of course, while the exact reasoning behind Parham’s racial view of the world was distinctly his own, his beliefs were also a reflection of the culture around him which stratified the white and black race. Evidence from local newspaper articles about the Azusa Street meetings suggests a dismissal of the revival, based on the fact that it began “among ignorant negroes.”³¹ However, the dismissal soon became indignation once people noticed that whites were also being attracted to the Azusa meetings. The wording of one particular *Los Angeles Times* article demonstrates this:

Soon after [Iva Campbell] joined the church other white women followed her example. Many young white girls were seized with a desire to become members. The attention of the police was called to the manner the Negro elders had of 'laying on of hands,' and the wholesale practice of 'converting' the young women stopped.³²

There was an obvious implication of the inherent evil of "negro elders" corrupting innocent "young white girls" with "the strange doctrines taught by the one-eyed negro preacher."³³ Especially the fact that the police were called in to monitor the situation—and apparently not until whites were being converted—demonstrates a fear of whites being "infected" by deviant African American spirituality. Obviously, there was a sense in which black spirituality was tolerated as long as it did not influence anything beyond their own race, but it was when their influence grew beyond themselves that others became concerned. Henry Mitchell, a black pastor, writing in the 1960s, described a similar situation in his time: An African American within a predominately white Christianity "is accepted, but only as a full practitioner of and participator in *white* religious culture."³⁴ Parham could accept African Americans on his own terms, but, according to his paternalistic worldview, they would always be in a place of receiving his influence, but never the other way around. This was one thing Parham seemed unwilling to do. Though blacks could receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit and even minister to one another, he would not receive anything new from them; he had to be the one in control.

After Charles Parham's denunciation of the Azusa Street revivals, he of course lost his position of leadership in the movement in Los Angeles. In response to his short but surprising message of reproof, he was asked to leave by some of the elders of the mission.³⁵ From Azusa Street, he went to another part of Los Angeles and held competing

Pentecostal services, drawing away some of the worshippers at the Azusa mission. He did not really meet with success in the Los Angeles area, except in “causing the first major division at Azusa.”³⁶ In the year following Parham’s denunciation of the Azusa Street revival, Parham himself become rocked by scandal. In July, 1907, Parham was arrested and charged with sodomy. Though he denied these accusations and the charges were dropped, the lingering scandal and a few other unsuccessful power maneuvers effectively ended his once prominent role in the burgeoning Pentecostal movement. “For decades, Pentecostal historians did not even mention his name.”³⁷ Finally, in 1909, even his own informal organization, the Apostolic Faith, officially rejected Charles Parham’s leadership.³⁸

Many of the early Azusa Pentecostals also seemed to write Parham out of their histories of the movement. In an “Inside Story of the Azusa Street Outpouring,” Emma Cotton, an African American woman and member of the Azusa Street Mission, gave her history of the Azusa Street revival and of how it began. Interestingly, in the background to Seymour’s arrival in Los Angeles, she disregarded the role of Charles Parham in Seymour’s acceptance of the “tongues” doctrine completely. In describing Seymour’s transition from preaching more of a Holiness doctrine to a distinctly Pentecostal doctrine, she attributed this change to the work of God and to the influence of Lucy Farrow (who introduced Seymour to Parham and later joined Seymour in Los Angeles). It was not even noted that Farrow worked as a governess for the Parham family, nor even that Seymour attended Parham’s Bible school (though technically seated outside the classroom).³⁹

Throughout his life, Parham would continue his criticism of the Azusa Revival and of much of the Pentecostal movement, as well. In a book he published in 1910, Parham

wrote that two thirds of “tongue stuff over the country is not Pentecost.”⁴⁰ He was also opposed to the “Finished Work” doctrine, later to be introduced by William Durham.⁴¹ In his later years, he was also a sympathizer of the Ku Klux Klan, and would occasionally speak at meetings of the KKK.⁴² Apparently, he tried to retain some control and influence over the Pentecostal movement, but it was futile. The *Word and Witness*, a Pentecostal newsletter edited by one of his former associates, E. N. Bell (who later became the first leader of the Assemblies of God), stated in 1912 that, due to his errant doctrines, Parham had “long since been repudiated,” despite his claims of being “the head and leader of the Apostolic Faith Movement.”⁴³

After Parham’s general dismissal from the mainstream of the Pentecostal movement, he tried to organize an expedition to the Middle East in a search for the Noah’s Ark and the Ark of the Covenant. Apparently, before he could secure his passage in New York, he was mugged, losing all the money he had raised for the trip. Only a little while afterward, he returned to Kansas in 1909, dejected.⁴⁴ He spent the remainder of his life conducting various evangelistic crusades, with his base of operations in Baxter, Kansas, though he never achieved the recognition within Pentecostal circles that he had previously. Though he had been ousted from most Pentecostal circles, there were over twenty five hundred supporters at his funeral in 1929. Though his gravestone named him “Founder of the Apostolic Faith Movement,” his racist ideology causing the rejection of Seymour and the revival at Azusa Street hindered him from continuing as one of its apostles.⁴⁵

Seymour’s Response

While we know that Parham was of course asked to leave the Azusa Street mission (and lost any control of it), unfortunately we do not have complete records of all that

happened following Parham's attack. However, judging from other examples of Seymour's rhetoric and from the subsequent issues of the *Apostolic Faith* newsletter, we can safely argue that the response was mild. Seymour did allow himself one moment to frame the situation in a racial context, however, making what some claim to be his "only reference . . . to race,": "You know, it is my color."⁴⁶ Besides this single comment, which was most likely made privately, there is not much evidence of a counter-attack. Even in critical accounts of the early Azusa Street revival, it is recorded that "Parham's company said Seymour's people had the devil in them," though the critics could find no evidence that those at Azusa Street responded in kind.⁴⁷ Rather, this excerpt from the December 1906 issue of the *Apostolic Faith* suggests that their strategy was one of non-confrontation.

It seems that God is sweeping things. He is running right over the devil here—not paying attention to Him—saving, sanctifying, and baptizing souls, bringing them out of darkness into the marvelous light of the Son of God. Hallelujah! Glory to our God.⁴⁸

Parham's and Seymour's rhetorical styles were vastly different. While an examination of Seymour's extant works reveals humility and even a more subdued nature, Parham was definitely more brash in his speech. In one published sermon, Parham ridiculed what he deemed the superfluous education of Ph.D.-holding denier of the gift of tongues, mockingly claiming that "one week" at Parham's school would graduate him with a "post-graduate course with A.S.S. on the end of his name"—a jiving reference to the Old Testament story of a donkey given the brief supernatural ability to speak.⁴⁹ This was not Seymour's way at all—a fact that perhaps made it easier for whites to receive from his ministry.

Because Seymour and the leadership in Los Angeles obviously would not comply with Parham's desire for a segregated church, his denunciation of the revival did

necessitate that the Azusa Mission break from under the covering of Parham's national Apostolic Faith affiliation. This was also reflected in the November 1906 edition of the *Apostolic Faith* newsletter. Whereas previous editions name the publisher as "The Apostolic Faith Movement," of Los Angeles, this post-Parham issue was "Published by The Pacific Apostolic Faith Movement," and "headquartered in Los Angeles."⁵⁰ Though just a slight change in name, the shift would lead to some greater effects later.

Then, after waiting a month—probably because the November issue was published soon after Parham's visit, and possibly also to avoid being reactionary—the December 1906 issue of the *Apostolic Faith* contained a front-page article titled, "Pentecost with Signs Following: Seven Months of Pentecostal Showers. Jesus, Our Projector and Great Shepherd." This article, though it did not mention anything specifically about Parham's actions in Los Angeles, did clarify that Parham was no longer the "Projector," or leader, of the Apostolic Faith mission in Los Angeles, claiming instead Jesus as their shepherd. Instead of implicating Parham's racism as the reason for the split, the article self-effacingly described how, in their immaturity, the mission previously looked to human leadership, but now looked to God.⁵¹ The issue also contained some doctrinal clarifications, rejecting some of Parham's other unorthodox views, including his biracial explanation of the "eighth day creation," the "annihilation of the wicked" doctrine, and his prohibition against eating pork.⁵²

Seymour, in his later years, and mostly due to his break with Parham reverted to his Holiness roots theologically, especially in regard to Parham's trademark doctrine that speaking in tongues was the sole and authoritative initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. In *Doctrines and Disciplines*, a booklet Seymour published several years

later, he broadened evidence of Spirit Baptism to love, rather than the tongues Parham so strongly advocated.⁵³ He wrote: “The baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire means to be flooded with the love of God and power for service, and a love for the truth of God’s word.”⁵⁴ European scholar Walter J. Hollenweger describes it best like this: “For [Seymour] Pentecost meant more than speaking in tongues. It meant loving in the face of hate—overcoming the hatred of a whole nation by demonstrating that Pentecost is something different from the success-oriented American way of life.”⁵⁵

Of course, Parham’s unbecoming denunciation of Azusa Street helped to form Seymour’s evolving doctrine of the multiple evidences for the baptism in the Holy Spirit. On the one hand, Seymour’s potent exposure to the evils of race prejudice, hate, and persecution caused him to realize the importance of unity and the overcoming power of love. On the other hand, the fact that such virulence could come from one who spoke in tongues himself and who was among the chief defenders and propagators of the speaking-in-tongues phenomenon forced Seymour to examine and then alter his own doctrine, for the sheer sake of logical consistency. After all, if speaking in tongues were the evidence of a Spirit-filled life, how could one explain the actions of a tongues-speaker like Parham? Thus, though public reactions to Parham’s denunciation were brief and limited only to what was necessary in continuing with the Pentecostal revival, it is obvious that the split with Parham had a deep impact on Seymour himself.

Though Parham’s fierce rebuke had a significant impact on Seymour, it is clear that Seymour did not respond with a reciprocal sense of hostility to other white Pentecostals, at least not immediately. Though eventually Seymour did become guarded with respect to the influence of Anglo-American leaders, several more events were to

transpire before then, testing his resilience. In fact, throughout the year 1907, there were many white preachers who would preach at the Azusa Street Mission.⁵⁶ Moreover, when Seymour left for an extended four-month ministry tour of the South, he left the mission in the hands of Elmer Fisher, a white pastor from Los Angeles.⁵⁷

As the movement grew, several other Pentecostal missions were started around the city, but for the most part—with the exception of Parham, of course—these were begun with a sense of unity and connectedness to the original Azusa mission. Most leaders of the Pentecostal missions in Los Angeles remained in fellowship with Seymour and they met together weekly at the Azusa Mission. Moreover, the summer of 1907 saw a “grand camp meeting in Los Angeles” which was put on as a joint effort by the various Pentecostal (or “Apostolic Faith”) missions of the city.⁵⁸ The *Apostolic Faith* newsletter, along with reports from around United States and the world, even kept its readers updated on happenings at the other local Pentecostal missions in the city.

Despite Parham’s censure of the Azusa Mission, its influence beyond Los Angeles continued, as well. Due to the ever-expanding nature of the work, Seymour began to implement an organizational structure to handle the different activities of the mission. This was met with some resistance, due to the fierce anti-denominationalism and anti-organizational convictions of many of the Holiness people who embraced the Pentecostal message. Frank Bartleman, one of Seymour’s earliest adherents, actually left to begin an additional Pentecostal mission in the city. Specifically, it was the installation of a sign on the building, saying “Apostolic Faith Mission,” that prompted his exodus. Besides a few dissenters, though, the work carried on fairly well. Regardless, the Apostolic Faith

Mission at Azusa Street was, by its very nature missional, always sending people out from the mission to establish new Pentecostal centers.

The Departure of Florence Crawford and Clara Lum

One of the principal leaders sent out from the Azusa Street revival was Florence Crawford. Crawford first encountered Pentecost at Azusa Street, hungry for a deeper spiritual experience, during the early days of the revival. Soon after she began attending the mission's services, she experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit for herself and quickly took on a central role within the movement. She became a member of Azusa Street's administrative board and also was part of the three-member editorial team of the *Apostolic Faith* newsletter, alongside Clara Lum and William Seymour. She was also among the first itinerant preachers sent out by the mission at Azusa, with Seymour naming her State Overseer of California for the Apostolic Faith Mission.⁵⁹ Crawford first went to Portland, Oregon, at the end of 1906 in order to begin an Apostolic Faith Mission there, patterned after the "headquarters" in Los Angeles. Though the relationship between the Portland and Los Angeles ministries remained amicable at first, after a time Crawford's relationship with Seymour became strained. While Crawford, who had served as the state director for the Apostolic Faith Mission in Los Angeles, had originally felt a divine call to Oregon, and had Seymour's blessing in being there, in the summer of 1908, she broke ties with the Los Angeles mission and moved to Portland for good.

Two weeks later, former *Apostolic Faith* editor and member of the credentialing committee, Clara Lum, joined Crawford in Portland. When she left Los Angeles, she also brought with her two of the twenty mailing lists for the paper. Then, in the summer 1908 issue of the newsletter, the following announcement appeared: "We have moved the paper

which the Lord laid on us to begin at Los Angeles to Portland, Oregon, which will now be its headquarters.”⁶⁰ This was all done without Seymour’s approval.⁶¹ Thus, within a matter of months, Crawford and Lum, Seymour’s former associates, had effectively hijacked the *Apostolic Faith* newsletter from Seymour and the mission in Los Angeles. Moreover, the departure of two of Seymour’s closest and most important workers to the newly established Portland mission was to become one of the most devastating events signaling the Azusa Mission’s loss of prominence within the Pentecostal movement.

The effects of this so-called “relocation” proved devastating for the Azusa Mission. The loss of the *Apostolic Faith* newsletter meant the loss of a national voice for the Los Angeles “Headquarters” of the Apostolic Faith Pentecostal movement. As Pentecostal historians Edith Blumhofer and Grant Wacker claim, “If any one text spoke for the movement as a whole, it was the *Apostolic Faith*.”⁶² Of more direct practical relevance, the newsletter was also a significant source of funding for the mission’s activities. With the paper being relocated, so was the address to which correspondence—and financial support—would be sent. Iain MacRobert, who wrote the *Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism in the USA*, claims that the relocation of the *Apostolic Faith* signaled the end of an era of racial equality within Pentecostalism.⁶³ While this claim describes what at least may have been a long-term consequence of the move, the two women’s break with Seymour did not seem to be racially motivated. Rather, a look at the rhetoric surrounding the actual situation will help yield some clearer conclusions of how and why this break occurred.

The most probable reason for Crawford and Lum’s exodus from the Apostolic Faith Mission in Los Angeles is related to Seymour’s marriage to Jennie Evans Moore.

Both Lum and Crawford objected to this union, probably due to Lum's possible romantic attraction to Seymour and Crawford's close friendship and loyalty to Lum.⁶⁴ Though there is no explicit statement relating this, there is evidence to suggest it. Early in 1908, Seymour turned to Bishop Charles H. Mason for relational advice. Seymour was considering marriage. However, it was not necessarily Jennie Evans Moore—whom he later married—about whom Seymour was asking. William Seymour was asking Mason about the propriety of an interracial marriage.⁶⁵ Though Mason does not confide who specifically Seymour was interested in, Clara Lum was the most likely candidate. Lum served alongside Seymour on the ministerial credentials committee and worked with him on the monthly newsletter. Additionally, the Azusa workers all spent much of their time together, eating and sleeping on the second floor of the mission, giving evidence that there was at least the opportunity for romantic attraction to develop.⁶⁶

Unfortunately for Miss Lum—and perhaps for the peace of the Azusa mission—Mason advised Seymour that his marriage to a white woman would be too large of a stumbling block for most whites to accept, and thus would hurt the overall cause of the already controversial movement. As a result, shortly thereafter, Seymour married another female member of the leadership committee and the first woman in Los Angeles to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit, Jennie Evans Moore.⁶⁷ Of course, per Mason's advice, she was also black—or “Ethiopian,” as she referred to herself on her marriage certificate.⁶⁸ After the marriage, Lum worked with Seymour on one last issue of the *Apostolic Faith* in Los Angeles and then moved up to Portland, taking some of the mailing list with her.

Though Florence Crawford was not directly involved in this drama of relational issues, the fact that Lum chose to join Crawford after leaving Los Angeles is significant, considering her strong beliefs against the propriety of marriage, in general. Her conviction of the imminence of Christ's second coming led her to believe that engagement in any "worldly" affairs, including marriage, were superfluous and improper considering the urgency of the call to prepare for Christ's return. For this reason, Crawford was also opposed to Seymour's marriage.⁶⁹ Thus, it is most likely that this was the primary reason for Crawford's and Lum's break with the Azusa Street mission.

More important to the study, however, are the actual effects of this rift. Of course, the most obvious is the Azusa mission's loss of a widely circulated national newsletter. At the time of its relocation, its print run was in excess of 40,000 copies.⁷⁰ Thus, the loss of the paper had a significant effect on Seymour's continued influence over the Pentecostal movement. Following Lum's departure, Seymour and the team at Azusa Street only published one more issue (October-November 1908) of the *Apostolic Faith* from Los Angeles, and there are currently no extant copies of that issue.⁷¹

Being involved with the Azusa mission and working under Seymour's leadership, both Crawford and Lum were devoted to Seymour's ideal of unity, both racial and otherwise. In fact, one Portland newspaper article described how Crawford almost lost custody of her daughter for permitting her to "roll around on the floor among Negroes and white men for a couple of hours."⁷² Even in 1914, the Portland paper proclaimed, "All nationalities have been melted down and made one in the Gospel, without respect of persons. The Spirit has spoken in new tongues through those that have received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, in Italian, French, German, Chinese, Hebrew and many other

languages.”⁷³ Thus, while Seymour’s direct influence on the national movement may have been hindered, the voice calling for unity was not silenced. In reconciling their standing commitment to unity with their break with Seymour and the disingenuous move of relocating the *Apostolic Faith*, the new editors utilized some interesting rhetoric.

While the original announcement generically stated, “We have moved the paper which the Lord laid on us to begin at Los Angeles to Portland, Oregon, which will now be its headquarters,” this allowed many people to assume that Seymour was still part of the “we” who had moved the paper to Los Angeles.⁷⁴ While this wording may be deceitful, there is also the possibility that Clara Lum, at least, did not see a perceived division with the ministry in Los Angeles. Though she may have felt the need to leave the mission due to relational issues, the work of God in Los Angeles and Portland was nonetheless the same. Additionally, because it is most likely that Lum was the one primarily responsible for editing the paper, she may have felt justified in taking the two distribution lists with her. To be sure, the fact that Seymour only published one more issue of the *Apostolic Faith* following her exodus supports this hypothesis. While some claim it was the missing distribution list that led to the demise of the Los Angeles paper, one must remember that probably the most valuable element of the paper’s previous success was Lum herself. In many ways, it was Lum’s project from the beginning, for it was she who initially acquired the typewriter to begin the publication.⁷⁵ Moreover, the fact that Lum was able to insert in the last edition of the Los Angeles paper an announcement of the paper’s move to Portland—ostensibly without Seymour’s approval—shows her centrality in the work of the paper. In summary, the idea that the Portland paper was simply a continuation of the Los Angeles paper—as opposed to a pirate paper published with a stolen mailing list—

was not entirely out of the question. That was, of course, until later in the summer, when Seymour and his new wife made the 965-mile trek to Portland with the intent of retrieving the two lists.⁷⁶

Though they were unable to secure the two missing mailing lists from Lum and Crawford, the visit at least convinced them of the discontinuity between the Los Angeles and Portland papers—or extracted a confession from them—depending on one’s perspective. As Lum noted: “We said it was moved from Los Angeles when we should have stated we were starting a new *Apostolic Faith* of Portland, as nothing was moved except two lists of subscribers, leaving 20 complete lists of all subscribers in Los Angeles.”⁷⁷ Unfortunately, because of the controversy surrounding Crawford and Lum’s relocation to Portland unlike other missionary endeavors this one resulted in hostility. For Crawford and Lum, this cut them off from association with their Pentecostal roots. For the Azusa Mission, the lack of a national newsletter resulted in a devastating blow to its prominence within the Pentecostal movement. For Seymour, this resulted in another battle wound, weakening his vision for the transcendent unity he was known to preach. Over time, this would result in a degree of reversal from his initial vision of interracial and ecumenical Christian unity. Even as early as August 1908 it was reported that although there were still several white people attending the meetings, the Azusa Mission was “entirely controlled (humanly speaking)” by a black leadership team.⁷⁸

William Durham and the Final Blow to Seymour’s Optimism

Following the brief controversy over Crawford’s and Lum’s departure and the loss of the *Apostolic Faith* newsletter to the editors now based in Portland, the *Apostolic Faith* Mission at Azusa Street continued to attract new visitors, though its popularity had

decreased some, and seemed to fluctuate, as well. This was probably due both to Seymour's several ministry trips across the United States during this time (and his corresponding absence from the Azusa Mission), as well as to the founding of several other Pentecostal churches in the area. By 1910, there were 25 of these churches holding Pentecostal meetings.⁷⁹

Then, in 1911, while Seymour was on a ministry trip across the country, the crowds once again returned en masse to Azusa for the meetings of famed Chicago preacher William Durham. This was Durham's second trip to the Azusa Street Mission, but his first time preaching there. Durham first heard of the Pentecostal message and of the events at Azusa Street shortly after the meetings gained prominence in the spring of 1906. While he was hesitant at first to endorse the revival (especially the focus on speaking in tongues), his interest grew until he finally made the trip himself in early 1907. He arrived in Los Angeles open to experiencing Holy Spirit baptism for himself, though it was three weeks before the breakthrough came and "a strange and wonderful and yet glorious" thing happened.⁸⁰ As he describes it,

He [God] worked my whole body, one section at a time, first my arms, then my limbs, then my body, then my head, then my face, then my chin, and finally at 1 a.m. Saturday, March 2, after being under the power for three hours, He finished the work on my vocal organs and spoke through me in unknown tongues. I arose, perfectly conscious outwardly and inwardly that I was fully baptized in the Holy Ghost.⁸¹

When he arrived back to his Mission in Chicago, the congregation was enthusiastic about the new revival, as were many others. They began their own series of meetings which drew large crowds and quickly overflowed into the street, and this continued for several years. Between 1908 and 1910, it is recorded that 800 people alone were water baptized at the ever-expanding mission.

On his second trip to Los Angeles, however, Durham came not just to receive, but to propagate a new teaching. After his first experience at Azusa Street, he continued to wrestle with the typical Pentecostal teaching on the experience of sanctification, which was taught as being a work of God meant to be received between salvation and baptism in the Holy Spirit. The majority of Pentecostals had been incorporated from the American Holiness movement of the 1800s. The Holiness movement was largely infused with an adaptation of the doctrine of John Wesley, Great Awakening evangelist and founder of Methodism, with a special focus on Wesley's doctrine of sanctification. This doctrine, as members of the Holiness movement promulgated it, called for a second experience, or "work of grace," following initial conversion (at which one is saved from eternal condemnation). In this second work, one was made free from the tendency to sin. This experience, described as sanctification, does not cause the sanctified Christian to cease sinning completely, but instantaneously removes the propensity toward habitual trespasses. While Seymour and his first Pentecostal influence, Charles Parham, simply added the Holy Spirit baptism experience as a third step to the pre-existing Holiness sequence of salvation and sanctification experiences, others began to question the traditional Holiness conceptualization of Christian development.

Durham introduced to Pentecostalism the "Finished Work" doctrine, critiquing the Holiness perspective that salvation and sanctification are given in two separate doses.⁸² Durham did not come from a strictly Holiness background and his revelation of the "Finished Work" of Christ on the cross, precluding the need for a second experience of sanctification, was not entirely original. Durham was originally affiliated with the nondenominational group, World's Faith Missionary Association (WFMA), having been

ordained by them in 1902. Though a Holiness-type organization, it was distinct from others in the movement in its emphasis on Jesus Christ's finished work at his crucifixion. WFMA founder Charles Hanley writes in a monthly paper that "Everything was fully done long, long ago . . . if it were necessary for something else to be done, it would not have been a perfect sacrifice." Thus, using his logic, when one accepted Christ's work on the cross for a salvation experience, sanctification came along with it, and a separate sanctifying moment was thus unnecessary.⁸³ After years of wrestling with the conflicting Pentecostal and WFMA understandings of Christian sanctification, Durham came under the conviction that his understanding of "the Finished Work" was the only true reflection of Christian development and salvation.

Thus, upon his return to Los Angeles, William Durham brought more than crowds; he brought controversy, as well. The primary message Durham was bringing to Los Angeles was his revelation of "The Finished Work" of Christ—eliminating the second for a second "sanctification" experience. Surprisingly, many Pentecostal leaders in Los Angeles felt that Durham's teaching was a de-legitimization of the sanctification they had personally experienced. After being barred from what was then the most populous Pentecostal mission in the city, the Upper Room Mission, Durham continued on to the Apostolic Faith Mission at Azusa, where he had first experienced Pentecost. Conveniently, Seymour was away on a preaching trip, so Durham at first encountered no resistance to his message there. In fact, his series of meetings at Azusa encountered great popular response. On Sundays, the building was so full that many had to be turned away.⁸⁴

Some of the more faithful members of the Apostolic Faith Mission were concerned by Durham's teaching, however, and sent for Seymour. Upon returning to his home church, he met with Durham, asking him to refrain from what Seymour considered false doctrine, reminding Durham of his leadership at Azusa. However, Durham refused to comply, considering his revelation and the popular support it received to be license enough to allow him to continue preaching. "Apparently Durham tried to block Seymour from preaching in his own pulpit."⁸⁵ Thus, instead of submitting to Seymour, Durham attempted mutiny. On the following Sunday morning, Durham called for a vote, deciding whether Durham would continue to preach or if the mission would be returned to Seymour's leadership. Of course, while there was no legitimate foundation for the vote Durham called, the popular backing for Durham was overwhelming: of the hundreds there, only a few sided with Seymour, the rightful leader of the mission.⁸⁶

In response, Seymour and the Azusa Street leadership utilized the same tactic that Seymour himself had been a victim of only a few years earlier: on May 2, 1911, Seymour padlocked the door to the Azusa mission. In response, some of the local Durham followers, including Frank Bartleman, helped the ousted preacher secure a new location: the Kohler Street Mission, where Durham continued to draw large crowds of people to hear his message.⁸⁷ Those who followed Durham to the new mission were convinced that somehow it was Seymour who had been in the wrong for taking charge of his own mission, not Durham. According to the following account by Frank Bartleman, the rationale seemed to lie in the fact that, before Durham returned, the Apostolic Faith Mission had been fledgling. Bartleman wrote:

I left and went to San Francisco. God gave me a prophecy before I left in Azusa that He was going to work mightily again in this place. And so He

did. In February 1911, God sent Brother Durham from Chicago. The Spring Street had gone down. In a week's time the power of God was back in old Azusa and most of the saints came back. Seymour was away in New York state and only left a couple of young colored brethren in charge. When Seymour came back in May the first thing he did, he padlocked the building.

Because of the general Pentecostal rejection of institutional ecclesiastical authority, popular support seemed to be a legitimate source for authority. Also for Bartleman, Durham's arrival seemed to coincide with the will of God, at least according to a prophecy he had received.⁸⁸ Interestingly, others also felt there was divine interest in this new doctrine. Even when Durham first arrived at the Los Angeles train station, one Pentecostal man was waiting there to meet him, claiming he had seen Durham the night before in a dream.⁸⁹ Thus, for him, God's approval on Durham's message was obvious. Of course, since those against Durham also claimed divine support, this only heightened the controversy. One woman from the Azusa mission had previously had a vision predicting the upcoming conflict. According to her vision, the devil and demons were sitting around a table discussing plans to stop the Pentecostal movement. After various plans of attack were put forth, one demon relayed his plan to "give them the baptism on the unsanctified life."⁹⁰ Because these dreams and visions helped to elevate the issue to epic status, this only heightened the controversial nature of the new doctrine. Moreover, Durham's inflammatory rhetoric also contributed to this.

Describing the impact of the "Finished Work" doctrine on early Pentecostalism, one historian writes, "People were forced to choose. Everyone had to take a side. Were you for or against Durham and his message?"⁹¹ For Durham, one's view on sanctification and redemption was "the very center and heart of the Gospel," and for that reason was worth fighting for.⁹² To him, being correct on this issue was extremely valuable, and

consequently, worth the sacrifice of controversy. Durham was by no means against unity, nor could he justifiably be accused of intentionally spreading discord—he himself wrote that he stood for the “unity of all God’s people in the Spirit,” yet felt the conviction that he could not “purchase unity by sacrificing the Truth of God.”⁹³ Simply put, the unity of many Pentecostals was regrettably swept up in the collateral damage from the controversy over his doctrine. In many ways, the difference between Durham and Seymour was simply a difference in focus. Because Seymour personally experienced the evils of racial segregation and disunity within the church, this was a primary message of Pentecost. Durham, on the other hand, had his focus occupied by the dangers of universalism and the threat of theological liberalism. Those who deny “saving virtue or merit in the Blood of Christ” or preach a watered-down “religion of love, one that recognizes the brotherhood of all men, and that there is good in all religion” were, for Durham, the culprits who “rob us of our Blessed Redeemer.”⁹⁴ Thus, while Durham was on a quest for doctrinal purity, Seymour valued unity more highly.

To that end, those of the Apostolic Faith Mission at Azusa Street “would not even allow an unkind word against their opposers or churches. The message was the love of God.”⁹⁵ In contrast, Durham’s aggressive rhetoric even caused some of his followers to disassociate themselves from him. Frank Bartleman recorded leaving the platform (that he was sharing with Durham) at one time, in an act of protest over Durham’s inflammatory attacks on those who disagreed with him.⁹⁶ Certainly, Durham was no one to mince words, saying at one time, “To my mind the second work theory is one of the weakest, and most unscriptural doctrines that is being taught in the Pentecostal movement.”⁹⁷ Also, after being locked out of the Apostolic Faith Mission at Azusa Street,

Durham even proclaimed that, though Seymour had at one time been “a mighty man, such [he was] no longer.”⁹⁸

While it is certainly true that the introduction of the “Finished Work” doctrine led to major discord within the early movement, this still does not answer the question of whether it necessarily contributed specifically to racial segregation. Though some argue that the split occurred predominately along race lines, it was hardly a distinctly racially motivated split—not anything at all along the lines of Parham’s denunciation. Among those in Los Angeles accepting the new “Finished Work” doctrine was Bartleman, the man who first coined the famous description of “the ‘color line’ [being] washed away in the blood.”⁹⁹ Also, that Durham would come to Azusa (twice) and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit through Seymour’s ministry indicated that he was comfortable with their integrationist stance. Moreover, though records do not contain any definitive accounts of integration between blacks and whites, Durham baptized 22 “Persians” in his Chicago mission.¹⁰⁰ In fact, because of the large crowds that Durham initially brought back to Azusa, some observed that (at least outwardly) the races were more unified than previously. This, of course, ended with Seymour’s rejection of the doctrine and Durham’s subsequent dismissal of Seymour’s position of leadership. Finally, at least in Los Angeles, direct affiliation with Seymour and the Azusa Mission seemed to be a stronger predictor of one’s stance in the “Finished Work” controversy, than on the integration of the races.¹⁰¹ Many of the crowd that Durham drew away after leaving Azusa were the same people that he had drawn back to the mission earlier that year.

Thus, one can conclude that the introduction of Durham’s “Finished Work” doctrine was by no means an explicitly racist attack. Nonetheless, its negative impact on

race relations cannot be entirely denied, especially when considering Durham's later attacks on Seymour. Finally, Durham's approach to doctrine is also an issue when it comes to interracial unity. Durham claimed his approach was doctrine-based and scripture-based, not experience-based. He derided what he deemed to be the merely experiential theology of those who held fast to sanctification as a second work, saying, "Others have declared they would never go back on some experience they had, no difference what the Bible taught."¹⁰² Due to the common emphasis on experience both within early Pentecostalism and African American theology, Durham's revelation can be seen as a break from this commonality. Whereas, in the beginning, Pentecostals came together based on the common experience of having received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, Durham's introduction of the "Finished Work" doctrine gave a different basis, a doctrinal basis, for separation.

Conclusion and Analysis

Though racial integration continued both at the Azusa Mission and among the larger Pentecostal movement in Los Angeles, the overwhelming sense of joyous unity experienced during the beginning of the revival had been lost amid constant outside pressure, denunciation by Charles Parham, the "father" of the movement, and dissension within the local Pentecostal community itself.¹⁰³ In 1914, as a response to what Seymour viewed as increasing attacks by white dissenters, the mission re-organized and amended its constitution so that "the bishop, vice-bishop, and all trustees were to be 'people of color.'"¹⁰⁴ Though this seems at first to be a reversal of Seymour's previous commitment to racial integration and church unity, it was more of a defensive measure against potential incitements to rebellion. Because so much division in the Apostolic Faith Mission at

Azusa Street had been instigated by white leaders, Seymour felt it was necessary for the continued survival of the mission to bar white Christians from substantive leadership positions at the mission. Seymour's "Apostolic Address," which was published in 1914 as a type of foreword to the revised constitution containing strictures limiting leadership positions to African Americans, contains his most lengthy and comprehensive treatment of the race issue in early Pentecostalism.

In content, the "Apostolic Address" is a narrative of the founding and growth of the Apostolic Faith Mission in Los Angeles from Seymour's perspective, with a concluding summary of the basic doctrines of the church, which was laid out more fully in the attached manuscript describing the *Doctrines and Discipline* of the Apostolic Faith Mission. After just one brief paragraph outlining the Mission's origin, the Address labeled the reason for the ensuing constitution: "Very soon division arose through some of our brethren."¹⁰⁵ Nonetheless, "in spite of all the trouble" that Seymour believed was caused by the "white brethren," he reiterated that he wanted them to continue to feel welcome—but the mission would still be led by African Americans. Seymour must have been hesitant to implement this restrictive measure, for he spent several lines reaffirming his commitment to unity "in the Holy Spirit" and explaining the new policy as not a change in conviction but rather a necessary measure "to keep down race war in the churches and friction, so [the white believers] can have greater freedom and liberty in the Holy Spirit."¹⁰⁶

Obviously, though he also takes time to mention that several white Pentecostals stuck by them and were faithful to the original mission through the years, Seymour believed that he could no longer trust his white brethren. Until 1914, Seymour and those

of the Azusa mission had remained, for the most part, silent on the specific problem of race, but their transcendent message of unity apparently was not effective enough. As Pentecostal historian Douglas Jacobsen writes, “The failure to articulate a clear and coherent theological rationale for pentecostal anti-racism was one of the key factors that allowed the pentecostal movement to lapse into the racist social patterns of the surrounding culture.”¹⁰⁷ Though Seymour’s non-inflammatory rhetoric on unity was more easily accepted by his contemporaries, it failed to provide the proper tools for practically implementing his vision for interracial unity. Augustus Cerillo, summarizing Frank Bartleman’s descriptions of the early days of modern Pentecostalism, writes how the early Pentecostals would enter “into a spiritual state where they cast off their personal, social, and material identity and collectively sought a direct experience of God. . . .”¹⁰⁸ This description accurately reflects in one way, the strengths, and on the other hand, the weaknesses of the early Pentecostal revivalists. While they emphasized the unity that the Spirit would bring and sought that, once they had achieved that unity, they failed to bring it back down to earth, so to speak. There lacked a practical articulation of the importance of racial integration for Pentecostal individuals. While this unity was hindered in one sense by the extremely racist culture surrounding them, there were other factors that also contributed to this outcome.

For one, the evangelical vision of early Pentecostalism was to reach the whole world with the message of Christianity, implementing the power they had received from the Holy Spirit. Just a few months into the Azusa revival, there were already three Pentecostal missions reaching out to the city of Los Angeles alone, and by 1914, there were 25. This is not to mention the countless missionaries being sent out from Azusa to

Brazil, Liberia, Sweden, and places all across the United States and around the world.

Though this missionary zeal is what catapulted Pentecostalism into a worldwide Christian movement (that today counts as many half a billion adherents), this also affected the message of Pentecost.¹⁰⁹ While one of the primary themes of Pentecost was unity in the Holy Spirit, this theme was nuanced by the equally strong Pentecostal impulse for dispersion.

While many of these satellite missions and outgoing evangelists remained closely tied to Seymour and the “original” mission at Azusa, the ties became harder to maintain practically.¹¹⁰ Moreover, one of the side effects of this rapid expansion was the loss of Seymour’s direct influence on the movement. Though people came to Azusa and “received the baptism” there was usually not any intense discipleship or training that occurred. Thus, when choosing a stance on various issues not directly related to core Pentecostal doctrine, many early Pentecostals reverted to their earlier religious background. Again, this was a revival of experience, not necessarily of theology.

Nonetheless, Walter Hollenweger, examining the global Pentecostal movement nearly a century after its origin, poses that Pentecostalism “could very well [offer] the key to overcoming racism in the world today,” especially if it removes itself from “Parham’s narrow ideology.”¹¹¹ Though this chapter highlighted some of the failures and limitations of Seymour’s call for unity and the divisions that beset the Azusa Street Mission, the following chapter will look at the expansion and organization of the Pentecostal movement on a national level. In some instances, Seymour’s message of racial reconciliation was taken up by other torchbearers. One of these instances is found in the Church of God in Christ, led by Bishop Charles Harrison Mason.

Notes

¹Cf. “One Church,” *The Apostolic Faith*, October, 1906, 3; “Arrested for Jesus’ Sake,” *The Apostolic Faith*, December, 1906, 3.

²Larry Martin, *The Life and Ministry of William J. Seymour* (Joplin, MO: Christian Life Books, 1999).

³Martin, *Life and Ministry*, 325.

⁴For a concise summary of these three factors, see James Choung, “Let the Walls Come Down: William Seymour,” InterVarsity Ministry Exchange, <http://www.intervarsity.org/mx/item/4332> (Accessed April 21, 2007).

⁵Qtd. in Martin, *Life and Ministry*, 269.

⁶See Craig Borlase, *William Seymour: A Biography* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2006), 178.

⁷Cf. I Timothy 1:2, Titus 1:4; Borrowed from Paul’s references to his disciples Timothy and Titus as “sons,” father-son terminology is common in church language to refer to people who had been strong religious influences over a certain individual or movement.

⁸J.G. Campbell, “History of the Apostolic Faith Movement: Origin, Projector, etc.,” *The Apostolic Faith* [Goose Creek, TX], May 1921, 6; qtd. in Martin, *Life and Ministry*, 268.

⁹“Letter from Bro. Parham,” *The Apostolic Faith*, September 1906, 1.

¹⁰“The Old Time Pentecost,” *The Apostolic Faith*, October 1906, 1.

¹¹“The Pentecostal Baptism Restored: The Promised Latter Rain Now Being Poured Out on God’s Humble People,” *The Apostolic Faith*, October 1906, 1.

¹²“Praying for the Holy Ghost,” *The Apostolic Faith*, October 1906, 3.

¹³Martin, *Life and Ministry*, 268.

¹⁴*Ibid*, 269.

¹⁵Charles F. Parham, *Everlasting Gospel*, in *The Sermons of Charles F. Parham*, ed. Donald W. Dayton (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1985), 72-3.

¹⁶Ethel E. Goss, *The Winds of God: The Story of the Early Pentecostal Movement (1901-1914) in the Life of Howard A. Goss*, 2nd ed., edited by Ruth Goss Nortjé, (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1978), 72.

¹⁷Ibid, 96.

¹⁸Charles F. Parham, *A Voice Crying in the Wilderness*, in *The Sermons of Charles F. Parham*, ed. Donald W. Dayton (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1985), 61.

¹⁹Parham, *A Voice Crying in the Wilderness*, 57.

²⁰See Isaiah 40:3; its fulfillment is described in Matthew 3:1-3.

²¹Parham, *A Voice Crying in the Wilderness*, 68.

²²Ibid.

²³Genesis 1:26, 2:5.

²⁴See Parham, *A Voice Crying in the Wilderness*.

²⁵Ibid, 83, 81-5.

²⁶Ibid, 81-5.

²⁷Ibid, 84.

²⁸Ibid, 106-7.

²⁹Ibid, 107. Regarding the prophecy to be “the head and not the tail of nations,” see Deuteronomy 28:13.

³⁰Parham, *A Voice Crying in the Wilderness*, 107.

³¹“Tongues Gift Is Denounced: Ministers of Akron Criticise Queer Sect,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 7, 1907, 13.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Henry H. Mitchell, “Toward the New Integration,” *The Christian Century*, June 12, 1968, 780.

³⁵Martin, *Life and Ministry*, 270.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid, 272.

³⁸Carl Brumback, *Suddenly... From Heaven: A History of the Assemblies of God*, (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1961), 152.

³⁹Emma Cotton, *Message of the Apostolic Faith*, 1939, qtd. in Larry Martin, ed., *Azusa Street: the True Believers, part 2* (Joplin, MO: Christian Life Books, 1999), 38-46.

⁴⁰Parham, *Everlasting Gospel*, 31.

⁴¹Cf. Parham, *Everlasting Gospel*, 32.

⁴²Allen Anderson, "The Dubious Legacy of Charles Parham: Racism and Cultural Insensitivities among Pentecostals" *PNEUMA: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 27, 1 (Spring 2005): 55.

⁴³E. N. Bell, "Notice About Parham," *Word and Witness*, October 20, 1912, 3. In particular, some of his errant doctrines include denial of the existence of hell and a belief in the annihilation of the wicked. (Cf. Fannie Waterfield's denunciation of his doctrine in the article "Revival News in Home Land: Haskell, Texas," *Word and Witness*, November 20, 1913, 3.).

⁴⁴James R. Goff, Jr. *Fields White Unto Harvest: Charles F. Parham and the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism* (Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 1988), 145-6.

⁴⁵*Ibid*, 159.

⁴⁶Martin, *Life and Ministry*, 270.

⁴⁷Alma White, *Demons and Tongues*, (Zarephath, NJ: Pillar of Fire Publishers, 1949), 81.

⁴⁸"Pentecost with Signs Following: Seven Months of Pentecostal Showers. Jesus, Our Projector and Great Shepherd." *Apostolic Faith*, December, 1906, 1

⁴⁹Parham, *The Everlasting Gospel*, 67.

⁵⁰*Apostolic Faith*, October, 1906, 2; *Apostolic Faith*, November, 1906, 2.

⁵¹"Pentecost with Signs Following: Seven Months of Pentecostal Showers. Jesus, Our Projector and Great Shepherd." *Apostolic Faith*, December, 1906, 1

⁵²*Ibid*, 1; Untitled, *Apostolic Faith*, December, 1906, 1; "Question of Meats," *Apostolic Faith*, December, 1906, 4.

⁵³Lewis, "William J. Seymour: Follower of the 'Evening Light,'" 182, see note.

⁵⁴William J. Seymour, "Doctrines," in William J. Seymour, *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission of Los Angeles, California*, ed. Larry Martin (Joplin, MO: Christian Life Books, 2000), 42-3.

⁵⁵Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, MA: 1997), 20.

⁵⁶Fred Andersen, "A Letter to Richard Crayne," in Larry Martin, ed., *Azusa Street: The True Believers Part 2*, (Joplin, MO: Christian Life Books, 1999).

⁵⁷Martin, *Life and Ministry*, 272.

⁵⁸"Los Angeles Campmeeting of the Apostolic Faith Missions," *The Apostolic Faith*, May, 1907, 1.

⁵⁹Estrela Alexander, *The Women of Azusa Street*, (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2005), 61.

⁶⁰*Apostolic Faith* [Portland, OR], July-August, 1908, 2; qtd. in Edith L. Blumhofer, and Grant Wacker, "Who edited the Azusa Mission's *Apostolic Faith*?" *Assemblies of God Heritage* (2001): 19.

⁶¹Blumhofer and Wacker, "Who edited the Azusa Mission's *Apostolic Faith*?" 18,19.

⁶²Blumhofer and Wacker, "Who edited the Azusa Mission's *Apostolic Faith*?" 15.

⁶³Iain MacRobert, *The Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism in the USA* (London: MacMillan Press, 1988), 58-59.

⁶⁴Alexander, *The Women of Azusa Street*, 52.

⁶⁵Bishop Ithiel Clemmons, "True Koinonia: Pentecostal Hopes and Historical Realities," *Pneuma* 4 (1981): 55.

⁶⁶Martin, *Life and Ministry*, 200-1.

⁶⁷*Ibid*, 146-7, 203.

⁶⁸*Ibid*, 298.

⁶⁹Alexander, *The Women of Azusa Street*, 66.

⁷⁰Blumhofer and Wacker, "Who edited the Azusa Mission's *Apostolic Faith*?" 15.

⁷¹*Ibid*, 18.

⁷²"Color Line Obliterated," *The (Portland) Morning Oregonian*, December 31, 1906, 9; qtd. in Alexander, 65. The "roll[ing] around on the floor" described in many newspapers deriding the early movement is the description of the effects of what Pentecostals now commonly term as "being slain in the spirit." Sometimes as a result of emotional ecstasy and usually attributed to a divine supernatural influence, the act of falling down is common today in many Pentecostal, neo-Pentecostal, and Charismatic

circles, and also has precedent in revival movements predating Azusa Street, though this practice has almost always been met with controversy, especially from outsiders.

⁷³“The Latter Rain Revival,” *Apostolic Faith*, 1914, 3

⁷⁴*Apostolic Faith* [Portland, OR], July-August, 1908, 2; qtd. in Blumhofer and Wacker, “Who edited the Azusa Mission’s *Apostolic Faith*?” 19.

⁷⁵Alexander, *The Women of Azusa Street*, 51.

⁷⁶Blumhofer and Wacker, “Who edited the Azusa Mission’s *Apostolic Faith*?” 20.

⁷⁷*Apostolic Faith* [Portland, OR], May/June, 1909, 2; qtd. in Blumhofer and Wacker, “Who edited the Azusa Mission’s *Apostolic Faith*?” 19.

⁷⁸George B. Studd, “Los Angeles,” *Confidence*, August 15, 1908, 10; qtd. in Martin, *The Life and Ministry*, 283.

⁷⁹Martin, *The Life and Ministry*, 285.

⁸⁰“A Chicago Evangelist’s Pentecost,” *Apostolic Faith*, February-March, 1907, 4.

⁸¹*The Missionary World*, May 1907, 8; qtd. in Edith L. Blumhofer, “William H. Durham: Years of Creativity, Years of Dissent,” in *Portraits of a Generation: Early Pentecostal Leaders*, ed. James R. Goff, Jr. and Grant Wacker (Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 2002), 130-1.

⁸²Allen C. Clayton, “The Significance of William H. Durham for Pentecostal Historiography,” *Pneuma* 1 (1979): 28.

⁸³“It Is Finished,” *Firebrand*, January 1901, 2; qtd. in Blumhofer, “William H. Durham,” 127.

⁸⁴Martin, *Life And Ministry*, 287.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*

⁸⁶*Ibid.*, 288-9.

⁸⁷Clayton, “The Significance of William H. Durham for Pentecostal Historiography,” 31, 32.

⁸⁸Martin, *True Believers*, 118.

⁸⁹Martin, *Life and Ministry*, 286.

⁹⁰Qtd. in Martin, *Life and Ministry*, 287.

⁹¹Douglas Jacobsen, *A Reader in Pentecostal Theology: Voices from the First Generation* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), 82.

⁹²William H. Durham, “The Finished Work of Calvary—It Makes Plain the Great Work of Redemption,” *Pentecostal Testimony* 2:2 (May 1912), in Jacobsen, *A Reader in Pentecostal Theology*, 86.

⁹³“Editorial,” *Pentecostal Testimony* 1:5 (1910?): 1, in Douglas Jacobsen, *Thinking in the Spirit: Theologies of the Early Pentecostal Movement* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003), 153.

⁹⁴Durham, “The Finished Work of Calvary”, 87.

⁹⁵Frank Bartleman, *Another Wave Rolls In! (formerly) What Really Happened at “Azusa Street?”*, edited by John Walker, (Monroeville, PA: Whitaker Books, 1962), 55.

⁹⁶Clayton, “The Significance of William H. Durham for Pentecostal Historiography,” 32.

⁹⁷William H. Durham, “Sanctification,” *Pentecostal Testimony* 1:8 (Summer 1911), in Jacobsen, *A Reader in Pentecostal Theology*, 82.

⁹⁸“The Great Revival at Azusa Street Mission—How it Began and How it Ended,” *Pentecostal Testimony* 1:8 (1911?): 3-4; qtd. in Jacobsen, *Thinking in the Spirit*, 140.

⁹⁹Augustus Cerillo, Jr., “Frank Bartleman: Pentecostal ‘Lone Ranger’ and Social Critic,” in *Portraits of a Generation: Early Pentecostal Leaders*, ed. James R. Goff, Jr. and Grant Wacker (Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 2002), 111,5.

¹⁰⁰Blumhofer, “William H. Durham: Years of Creativity, Years of Dissent,” 133.

¹⁰¹Lewis, “William J. Seymour: Follower of the ‘Evening Light,’” 169-170.

¹⁰²Durham, “The Finished Work of Calvary”, 86.

¹⁰³Martin, *Life and Ministry*, 324.

¹⁰⁴Ibid, 325.

¹⁰⁵William J. Seymour, “Apostolic Address,” in William J. Seymour, *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission of Los Angeles, California*, ed. Larry Martin (Joplin, MO: Christian Life Books, 2000), 30.

¹⁰⁶Ibid, 30.

¹⁰⁷Jacobsen, *Thinking in the Spirit*, 263.

¹⁰⁸Cerillo, “Frank Bartleman: Pentecostal ‘Lone Ranger’ and Social Critic,” 114-5.

¹⁰⁹James R. Goff, Jr. and Grant Wacker, Introduction to *Portraits of a Generation: Early Pentecostal Leaders*, xi. This figure, though an estimate, includes all Pentecostal denomination, as well an estimated number of Charismatics and neo-Pentecostals.

¹¹⁰While Pentecostalism traces its theological roots to Charles Parham and the doctrine he promulgated after the 1901 revival in Topeka, Kansas, Seymour's Apostolic Faith Mission at Azusa Street was the central location that actually spread Pentecostalism to the world.

¹¹¹Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide*, 23.

CHAPTER FIVE

Race Relations and Growth Beyond Los Angeles

Though several events at the Azusa Mission between 1906 and 1911 severely handicapped the unprecedented racial unity seen during the early months of the Azusa revival, complete segregation did not occur immediately. Moreover, even by the time Charles Parham unleashed his vindictive pronouncement of God's displeasure at Seymour's practice of racial integration in the fall of 1906, the Los Angeles revival had already begun to spread to other parts of the nation (and to various locations worldwide). Especially on a national level, there were several instances where the spirit of "Old Azusa" continued, particularly in some of the places to which Seymour traveled on evangelistic missions. Besides the distinctive emphases on experiential spirituality and on interracial unity, a third primary emphasis of the emergent Pentecostal movement was the call to missionary action, both abroad and within the United States. Thus, even when the activity at the Apostolic Faith Mission itself began to wane, the movement was gaining significant traction on a national level. People like Glenn Cook, G. B. Cashwell, William Durham, and C. H. Mason received the Pentecostal experience at Los Angeles and then began to propagate it across the nation. Many of these were also leaders within existing churches who had been sent to investigate the reports from Azusa and subsequently brought the message back to their own denominations and church networks. While the Pentecostal message was often met with resistance, there were also many who believed the message and experienced the "new outpouring" of the Holy Spirit for themselves.

This chapter will give a selected overview of the spread of Pentecostalism from Azusa Street across the United States, both by Seymour directly and by those directly influenced by the revival in Los Angeles. I will trace the continuation of the original Apostolic Faith movement after Parham's removal from leadership. Finally, I will also investigate the implementation of Seymour's interracial, ecumenical vision on a national scale, especially within the Church of God in Christ.

The Spread of Pentecost Across the U.S.

In the years following 1906, there were several Pentecostal revivals in various cities across the United States that saw some of the same occurrences of spiritual exuberance, speaking in unknown tongues, instantaneous healings, and conversions that were happening in Los Angeles. The majority of these revivals were in some way connected with the events at Azusa Street, being influenced either by reports of the Azusa revival or being led by Pentecostals sent out from the Los Angeles mission. Some of these revivals were directly connected to Seymour himself, since he also took some time traveling as a Pentecostal evangelist. Among the places Seymour held Pentecostal meetings were Oakland, San Francisco, and San Jose, in California; various places in Texas; Indianapolis; Chicago; New York; Washington, D.C.; Houston; and several other places throughout the United States. Moreover, besides holding revivals, in some of these areas, he helped to establish new Pentecostal churches and issued ministerial credentials for those who would stay and continue the work in those cities.¹

One of the most well-documented revivals is that which occurred in Indianapolis. Glenn A. Cook, who served on Seymour's ministerial credentials committee, had returned from Azusa to his hometown in Indianapolis in January, 1907, bringing the message of

Pentecost to his home church, which was then part of the Christian Missionary Alliance, a fellowship within the Holiness movement. Though the message was rejected by the leadership of the church, he began a series of meetings, which shortly grew very large, drawing people from all over Indiana and the surrounding region. A few months afterward, Seymour himself also came and spent several weeks aiding in the Indianapolis meetings.²

Like the Azusa Revival, the new Pentecostal group in Indianapolis was known (and often derided) for its sense of racial equality. The welcome given to Seymour as a leader of the movement was just one example of this. When Seymour first arrived, Cook (who was white) greeted him “with a hug and a kiss,” a practice common among many of the early Pentecostals and some Holiness groups.³ Moreover, blacks and whites would commonly lay hands on one another in prayer, tarry at the altar together, and fellowship together outside the meetings.⁴

The Indianapolis revival also drew many who would later become national leaders within the Pentecostal movement. Two of these leaders who were converted to Pentecostalism in Indianapolis were J. Roswell Flower (who later became one of the founding organizers of the Assemblies of God) and Garfield T. Haywood (one of the few African Americans initially associated with the Assemblies of God). The Indianapolis revival also drew many people from the Christian and Missionary Alliance. Though many in this denomination supported the new Pentecostal movement, the leaders rejected the emphasis on speaking in tongues, preventing the denomination from officially sanctioning the new movement. Thus, many people left the Alliance and formed independent Pentecostal missions, some of which later became part of the Assemblies of God.⁵

Another of the more significant propagators of the Pentecostal revival was Gaston Barnabas Cashwell. G. B. Cashwell, from North Carolina, came to Azusa in the fall of 1906. After overcoming his racial prejudice, he received the Pentecostal experience when Seymour and some others laid hands on him. By the end of that year, Cashwell returned to the Southeast and began holding Pentecostal revival services in a building he had rented in Dunn, North Carolina. In only a month's time, those services sparked an epic change in the Holiness movement of the southeastern United States, as thousands of people came to those meetings and received the Pentecostal experience. According to Vinson Synan, Cashwell's meetings in Dunn, North Carolina became "for the Southeast what Azusa Street had been for the West."⁶ As a result of Cashwell's meetings, a great majority of both lay-people and ministers within the Holiness movement were absorbed into the new Pentecostal awakening, and many from denominational churches were also joining the new movement. At the close of January, 1907, Cashwell moved the services back to his home church in the same town and also began traveling across the Southeast, preaching the Pentecostal message, drawing more people into the movement. Pentecost made such a big impact among the Holiness groups in that region of the United States that many of them, such as the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church, the Holiness Church, and the Church of God, were transformed, becoming Pentecostal associations. In 1911, the Holiness Church and the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church merged, becoming the Pentecostal Holiness Church.⁷

Cashwell's revivals were able to draw a significant number of others who would later become influential Pentecostal leaders, as well. In May 1907, Cashwell responded to a call from Leonard P. Adams to hold some services in Memphis and to preach the

message of Pentecost. As a result of these meetings, Adams received the baptism in the Holy Spirit and became a leader in the Pentecostal movement, soon joining with C. H. Mason, who had received Pentecost just a few months earlier at Azusa Street and who was also based in Memphis, with the Church of God in Christ.⁸

From Memphis, Cashwell went straight to Birmingham, Alabama, to hold another series of revival meetings. During this time, A. J. Tomlinson, the autocratic leader of the Church of God, a Holiness denomination, accepted the teaching of Pentecost. Tomlinson arranged for Cashwell to preach at the denomination's general assembly in 1908, where Tomlinson received the baptism and the Church of God became a Pentecostal denomination.⁹

Like Glen Cook and G.B. Cashwell, many others also went out from the Azusa Mission in Los Angeles, seeing revival and establishing Pentecostal churches across the country. Besides the evangelists themselves, who traveled across the country bringing the message of Pentecost, another primary means of spreading the message of Pentecost was through the publishing of newsletters. The newsletters published many first-hand reports of the revivals, causing many to travel to see for themselves what Pentecostalism was about. In the early part of the century, many of these Pentecostal newsletters, such as the *Apostolic Faith*, *Bridegroom's Messenger*, *Way of Faith*, *Pentecost*, and *Word and Witness*, sprung up across the country, being published by various leaders within the movement. Because most Pentecostals, like their Holiness predecessors, were vigorously anti-denominational and opposed to formal organization beyond the local church, the newsletters were a great way of linking local bodies of Pentecostals into a more unified movement, forming communities of Pentecostals across the country. Thus, the early

Pentecostals used both traveling evangelists and printed materials as ways of spreading the Pentecostal message beyond Azusa to the rest of the United States. At the same time, the original Pentecostal organization, Charles F. Parham's Apostolic Faith Movement, was also continuing to expand.

Parham's Organization

Although Parham's denouncement of Seymour and the Azusa revival signaled the beginning of his removal as head of the Pentecostal movement, his organization, the *Apostolic Faith*, continued on and in fact grew over the next several years. Parham opened a rival Pentecostal mission in Los Angeles after denouncing Seymour's Azusa Mission in October 1906. However, he did not stay in Los Angeles very long, leaving Los Angeles for Illinois in early December. Replacing Parham at the Los Angeles mission was W. Faye Carothers, one of his "most capable and trusted" co-laborers.¹⁰ Meanwhile, in Illinois, Parham preached his doctrine of Pentecost and attempted to gain leadership of Zion City, the utopian Christian city founded by Holiness revivalist and Pentecostal forerunner John Alexander Dowie. Though several people there accepted Parham's message of speaking in tongues and became part of the broader Pentecostal movement, Parham failed in his struggle for leadership. Then, upon his return to Texas in the summer of 1907, Parham's fate took a turn for the worse. It was in July, 1907, that Parham was arrested in San Antonio, Texas, on charges of sodomy with a younger man, J. J. Jourdan. Although the case was dismissed and he was released from jail after a few days, the charges dealt a blow to Parham's reputation from which he never fully recovered. Moreover, the mystery surrounding the events, including a purportedly forged confession of Parham's guilt, prevented public vindication.¹¹ Though Parham took a great fall

following this series of disappointments, he had already built up a striving Apostolic Faith Movement, his Pentecostal message continued, and the organization continued to plant new churches and issue ministerial credentials even without his leadership. Despite Parham's personal decline, there were over sixty different Pentecostal missions in the United States by the fall of 1908.¹²

While the Apostolic Faith movement struggled for a short while, even disbanding temporarily, the remaining leadership regrouped, quickly distancing themselves from their former leader and absolving themselves from the scandal surrounding him. The center of the Apostolic Faith association also shifted at this time from Texas to Arkansas, where there were many people being converted to Pentecostalism.¹³ After Parham was denounced by the majority of the leaders within his informal organization, W. F. Carothers, who had served as his National Field Director, was one of the first to separate himself from Parham. Carothers led a group of independent Pentecostals in Texas—most of whom had come from Parham's Apostolic Faith Movement—for several years before joining the Assemblies of God in 1914. Another man, Howard Goss, was to take the majority of organizational responsibilities after Parham's departure from the movement. Goss had come under Parham's ministry in 1903, when he experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit, embracing Parham's teaching on the matter. In fact, reports show that he was among the Bible students at Parham's school in Houston when Seymour first encountered Parham's doctrine of speaking in tongues and its connection with the baptism in the Holy Spirit.¹⁴ By 1907, he had become one of the core leaders within Parham's loose organization, being appointed field director for Texas under Parham's ministry. With the

rejection of Parham, Goss and Carothers were two of the primary leaders of the remaining organization.

Upon the removal of Parham from leadership in the Apostolic Faith movement, an ecumenical movement of re-unification with other Pentecostals was beginning to manifest itself. One significant example of this is found in W. F. Carothers attitude toward Parham's denunciation of the Azusa revival. Being chosen to replace Parham at the competing mission in Los Angeles, Carothers was doubtless familiar with the controversy that had occurred there earlier, though it is not certain whether he actually visited the Azusa mission for himself, or whether he had any personal contact with Seymour following the split. In 1908, he wrote in the movement's Houston-based newsletter (also called the *Apostolic Faith*)—the following:

Later in the winter, or after nine months of unity with the original movement, the work in Los Angeles separated from us, under which circumstances which the present writer believes justified them, but about which it would be painful to write.¹⁵

Thus, it seemed that Carothers did not fully agree with Parham's denouncement of the Azusa revival and that some of the division Parham had wrought within the movement was beginning to heal. However, Carothers' strict segregationist stance prevented any full reconciliation with the Azusa movement.

Howard Goss, working mainly in Texas and Arkansas, was also beginning to branch out to other Pentecostals. In 1907, upon hearing of Mason's conversion to Pentecostalism and the subsequent transformation of the Church of God in Christ to a Pentecostal denomination, Goss met with Mason and secured a preaching license through the Church of God in Christ.¹⁶ This was a significant step, being that Goss, a white Pentecostal, was joining himself to a primarily African American denomination. At the

same time, as with Carothers' reassessment of the Azusa revival, the significance of this move was limited. Though Goss had begun an official association with Mason and the Church of God in Christ, the relationship never progressed much beyond Goss's utilization of the legal standing granted to ministers properly affiliated with a recognized denomination.¹⁷ Though it is not clear why, it may have been Goss's racialized sensibilities that proved a hindrance to the further development of this relationship. As quoted from his diary, Goss utilized Mason's permission to issue credentials in order to help facilitate the "white work" with which he was involved.¹⁸ Although this does not necessarily imply that Goss was prejudiced against African Americans, it does demonstrate his commitment to segregation.

Although Goss and Carothers' commitment to the Southern system of segregation may have limited their affiliation with African American Pentecostal leaders, they did begin to start networking with several other white Pentecostals, many of whom were indirectly linked to the Azusa revival. One significant addition to the movement came when Eudorus N. Bell, formerly a Southern Baptist minister, first heard of the Pentecostal revival in 1907 and traveled to William Durham's North Avenue Mission in Chicago. After seeking baptism in the Holy Spirit for 11 months, Bell finally received the Pentecostal experience, with the required evidence (for Pentecostals) of speaking in tongues. After this, Bell became a Pentecostal minister, serving for a short time at his church in Fort Worth, Texas, and then becoming pastor of a Pentecostal church in Malvern, Arkansas.¹⁹ Having graduated from Stetson University, Southern Baptist Seminary, and the University of Chicago Divinity School, Bell was, by far, one of the most educated leaders of the Pentecostal movement, and quickly became one of the core

leaders within Goss's loose network of ministers. He also became the editor of the *Apostolic Faith* magazine, based in Houston, representing the association.²⁰

Then, in 1910, Bell and Goss expanded their existing network of churches even further, making an agreement of fellowship with Henry G. Rodgers, who had established an independent association of Pentecostal churches after being forced out of his Holiness denomination. Rodgers had converted to Pentecostalism in 1907, along with his friend and ministry associate Mack M. Pinson, at one of G. B. Cashwell's Pentecostal revival campaigns in Birmingham, Alabama. Upon receiving the baptism, Rodgers traveled with the Pentecostal message, starting several new Pentecostal churches, mostly in the South. Pinson about that time also began publishing an independent Pentecostal newsletter, called *Word and Witness*. With the consolidation of Goss' and Rodgers' Pentecostal networks, Pinson and Bell also consolidated their newsletters, using the name *Word and Witness*. The departure from the *Apostolic Faith* name was probably to avoid confusion with both Parham's magazine (which he continued publishing on his own) and Crawford and Lum's magazine of the same name, that was being published in Portland

Though Goss had received credentials with the Church of God in Christ several years earlier, it was at this time that the association, now including Rodgers and his group, began using the name *Church of God in Christ* more exclusively (though many times churches would call themselves Churches of God in Christ of the Apostolic Faith, which highlighted the Pentecostal nature of the church).²¹ While the name *Church of God in Christ* was, on the one hand, reflective of the official affiliation with Mason's denomination, the name was also suitable because of its "scriptural" and ecumenical nature. For early Pentecostals, it was of utmost importance that their organization names

were “scriptural,” given their view that they were restoring the Church to its New Testament origins: a universal church without divisive sects or denominations. Thus, the adaptation of the name *Church of God in Christ* was not only reflective of the affiliation with C. H. Mason, but it was also a significant step away from the dogmatic isolationism (as well as moral scandal) of Charles Parham, who had christened his organization as the *Apostolic Faith Movement*.²²

In just the few years since breaking with Parham, what was formerly the Apostolic Faith movement had changed significantly, also becoming much more ecumenical, at least with regard to fellow Pentecostals. The *Word and Witness* itself was a very ecumenical paper, attracting a readership beyond the white Church of God in Christ. One demonstration of this is evident in the December, 1912, edition, where there was a notice reminding all ministers affiliated with an association called the Pentecostal Assembly to renew their credentials with that organization. Additionally, the paper also reported events at various Pentecostal missions across the country, many with different affiliations in their name. In this way, the *Word and Witness* newsletter became a substantial voice within the broader Pentecostal movement and those who were once Parham’s followers were reconnected with the broader Pentecostal movement.²³

Racial Integration in the Pentecostal Movement

While the successors of Parham’s organization worked to reconnect with the rest of the burgeoning movement fueled by the Azusa Revival, the fundamental nature of the Pentecostal message was being negotiated. From the beginning, Parham’s doctrine, that speaking in unknown tongues is the universal evidence of Spirit baptism, was the distinguishing core of the Pentecostal movement. This was the experience that united all

Pentecostals and distinguished them from other religious groups. As the movement grew, there were other aspects of the Pentecostal message that became significant. Some of these, such as Durham's "Finished Work" doctrine, actually became divisive issues within the movement. Other aspects, such as the emphasis on divine healing or the urgency for evangelism stemming from a belief in Christ's imminent return, were additional features of Pentecostalism that were generally promoted by all Pentecostals. Of course, that aspect of the Pentecostal message on which this thesis focuses, racial unity, was adopted in varying degrees by different groups within the larger Pentecostal movement. Some, like William Seymour, saw divine love—and its by-product, racial unity—as central to the message of Pentecost, and held racial unity (which cannot be faked) to be a more sure sign of Holy Spirit baptism than speaking in tongues. Others, like Charles Parham, saw no place for racial integration within the confines of the message of Pentecost. For most Pentecostals, the message of racial unity was adopted at a level somewhere between these two extremes.

Obviously, for those who attended the Azusa Street Revival, Seymour's message of racial unity would necessarily have a central place. For G. B. Cashwell, abandonment of racial prejudice was implicitly a pre-requisite for receiving the baptism. In his personal account of his baptism in the Holy Spirit, he relates how he had to first overcome his own prejudice by allowing a black man to lay hands on him before he could receive the Pentecostal experience.²⁴ Others, like Glen Cook, would acquire Seymour's vision for racial unity and implement it in other places around the United States. Cook is an illustrative example of the breadth of Seymour's interracial vision. Not only did he, a white man, submit to Seymour's leadership in Los Angeles, but he also ministered to

people of all races in the Indianapolis revivals at his home church, as well as at Charles Mason's church in Memphis. Moreover, Cook also seemed to impart this sense of racial unity to those who attended his services. G. T. Haywood, who received the Pentecostal experience during a revival that Cook was leading, became one of the few African Americans who ultimately associated with the overwhelmingly white Assemblies of God, though he did not formally join the denomination.²⁵

Like Cook, G. B. Cashwell also welcomed both blacks and whites in his Pentecostal meetings. Unfortunately, his audiences failed to carry the message of racial unity that Cashwell had received during his visit to Los Angeles. The Pentecostal Holiness Church, which had converted to Pentecostalism predominately through the revivals of G. B. Cashwell, failed to continue the initial integrationist impulse of Azusa-influenced Pentecostalism. While, for a short time (between 1912 and 1913), the association apparently had a "Colored Convention"—that is, an ecclesiastical division especially aimed at accommodating African Americans within the movement—this initiative was short-lived. As a result, according to Joseph E. Campbell, the premier historian for the denomination, "The Pentecostal Holiness Church has since that time done no work among the colored brethren excepting the large missionary work in Africa."²⁶ Thus, while, it seemed that there was significant integration during the initial revival, this was short-lived. One of the reasons for this may lie in the fact that Cashwell, though he was responsible for converting several Holiness networks to Pentecostalism, mysteriously renounced his identity as a Pentecostal minister and returned to the Methodist church in 1909.²⁷ Consequently, the one who had experienced such a dramatic turn from prejudice to love, no longer had a direct influence on the direction of the movement.

A second possible reason for this short-lived integration may lie in the limitation of the initial integration itself. While the revival meetings welcomed both blacks and whites on equal footing, at the organizational level, the Pentecostal Holiness Church was segregating black ministers, putting them in their own conclave within the denomination. This led to frustration for black ministers, as well, since their influence over the denomination as a whole was suppressed. While Cashwell's audience may have heard the message of love, the aspect of racial equality, especially as brought about by integration, which was more implied than overtly made clear even at Azusa Street, was overlooked. Thus, the integration experienced early on within the Pentecostal Holiness Church was more likely a pseudo-integration that, while it preached brotherly love between people of all races, lacked the structural force to ensure true racial unity and equality that would endure beyond the initial stage of revival. Interestingly, the Pentecostal Holiness Church was not unique in this regard.

A. J. Tomlinson's Church of God (Cleveland, TN) was another Pentecostal denomination that exhibited at least limited integration. Like the leaders of the Pentecostal Holiness Church, Tomlinson had become Pentecostal through the influence of G. B. Cashwell. Also like those in the Pentecostal Holiness Church, Tomlinson considered racial integration a vital part of the new Pentecostal movement. One of his more interesting expressions of the necessity for racial unity within Pentecostalism was his "speckled-bird doctrine." Based on the scripture in Jeremiah 12:9—"Has not my inheritance become to me like a speckled bird? . . ."—Tomlinson argued that the true Church would be a unification of all races, with the speckles representing the variety of skin tones within the Church. Running with this revelation, Tomlinson adopted a

contemporary folksong, “The Great Speckled Bird,” as the church’s anthem and he “avidly recruited minorities to prove that the ‘middle wall of partition’ had indeed fallen.”²⁸ Tomlinson was able to achieve integration both within Pentecostal meetings and also within the leadership of his denomination. Thus, Tomlinson’s Church of God denomination was remarkable because it became a truly integrated body in the midst of an entire society dedicated to racial segregation. Even today, the church directly descended from Tomlinson’s leadership (now the Church of God of Prophecy) maintains a racially integrated body, with the racial demographics of the group proportionate to that of the general U.S. population.²⁹

Those affiliated with what was once Parham’s Apostolic Faith Movement also exhibited at least some level of racial integration. Of course, one of the most substantial signs of integration was their affiliation with the Church of God in Christ, which, prior to Pentecostalism, was a predominately African American denomination. Even Howard Goss, who would not approve of Seymour’s radical vision of racial integration, exhibited interracial charity in several instances. For one, it was Goss who met with Mason to request ministerial credentials with the Church of God in Christ.³⁰ It is also recorded that, in 1912, he attended “a large tent meeting in the Negro district,” which was being led by an unnamed African American minister.³¹ On the other hand, while he was eager for both blacks and whites to receive the Pentecostal experience, it was often done separately. Repeatedly throughout his biography (which was written by his wife, Ethel), the “Negro work” is referenced, as if it was a separate work that ran alongside the white movement.³² Mack M. Pinson also ministered among both white and “colored” people, though, as with Goss, it is likely they were more or less segregated.³³ Pinson did attempt to integrate a

revival meeting at one point, though this seemed to be unsuccessful. Also like Goss, he had some contact with Bishop C. H. Mason, having visited his church in 1907, while still seeking the baptism in the Holy Spirit.³⁴

However, despite these repeated instances of integration on a level of individual fellowship, with blacks and whites sometimes working together in revival meetings and such, integration was, for the most part, still limited on an organizational level. Of course, there were certainly some exceptions to this rule within the Pentecostal movement, such as A. J. Tomlinson's Church of God. Another significant exception is found in the Church of God in Christ.

C. H. Mason and the Church of God in Christ

The Church of God in Christ is one of the oldest recognized Pentecostal denominations. It was first organized in 1897, when Mason and another minister, C. P. Jones, were forced to withdraw from the Baptist church because of their affiliation with the Holiness movement and their Wesleyan teaching on the second work of sanctification.³⁵ The denomination continued as part of the Holiness movement until 1907, after several of the leaders of the Church of God in Christ—Mason, D. J. Young, and J. A. Jeter—visited the Azusa Street Revival in March and April of that year. Mason actually knew Seymour from before the outbreak of the revival, so he was interested in the movement not only as a religious revival, but also because of the involvement of his friend. Once in Los Angeles, Mason and his delegation all received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and returned shortly afterward to Memphis, ready to bring the message of Pentecost to their own denomination. However, by the time Mason returned to Memphis, Glen Cook had already come down to his church after the Pentecostal revival in

Indianapolis and was leading a series of revival meetings there. Consequently, the members of his predominately African American congregation actually received the message of Pentecost from a white man. Thereafter, Mason's church in Memphis quickly became one of the centers of Pentecostalism in the South, as well as a model of Seymour's message of racial unity and integration.³⁶

While his local congregation had been ready for his return due to the influence of Glen Cook, some of the other leaders within the Church of God in Christ were more reluctant to accept the Pentecostal message. Consequently, at a leadership gathering in August of 1907, Mason and about half the Church of God in Christ ministers withdrew from the original denomination and in September formed their own Pentecostal group, keeping the name Church of God in Christ. In November of that same year, the new Pentecostal Church of God in Christ held its first annual convocation, a meeting in which all ministers of the group would unite annually, holding revival meetings and making decisions regarding the development of the organization. This first meeting, though attended mostly by blacks, also included several white ministers. One of the more high-ranking white ministers involved with the Church of God in Christ was Elder W.B. Holt, who "became the national recording secretary" for the movement and, being an attorney, served as "legal advisor to Mason." He was also State Overseer for the state of California, and then expanded to missionary work in Utah. E. R. Driver, another white minister with the Church of God in Christ, served as an associate editor of *The Whole Truth*, the denomination's national publication.³⁷ Thus, the Church of God in Christ was one of the few Pentecostal denominations that were able to bring the message of racial unity into practice on an organizational and structural level.³⁸

From 1907, when the Church of God in Christ was reorganized as a Pentecostal denomination, affirming the message of the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles, it included both black and white ministers. Besides integration on a structural level, the meetings conducted by evangelists affiliated with the Church of God in Christ would also often be integrated.³⁹ In 1909, Lizzie Robinson and Elder R. E. Hart, both African American leaders within the COGIC held integrated revival services in Tennessee. Mason himself is quoted as saying, “The Spirit through me has saved, sanctified and baptized thousands of souls of all colors and nations.”⁴⁰ In 1916, Mason conducted a large integrated Camp Meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, drawing thousands of people, both black and white, including “many of the best white people of the city.”⁴¹ Apparently, Mason had a very positive effect on his audience—so much so that some of the white church leaders at the Nashville meetings were even recorded as saying, “If Brother Mason was a white man, we would gladly step aside our organizations.”⁴² Thus, even living in the American South, surrounded by a segregated culture, Mason persisted with the Pentecostal vision of racial harmony, even if others would not go along with him.

Moreover, besides including whites among the leadership in the denomination and conducting integrated meetings, Mason also extended the benefits of Church of God in Christ credentials to unaffiliated white Pentecostal ministers. Thus, there were two ways in which Mason invited white Pentecostal preachers to be affiliated with the Church of God in Christ. Not only did he ordain several white ministers who were actively part of the Church of God in Christ, but he also allowed a separate group of non-affiliated white ministers to use the Church of God in Christ name for business purposes. While this second group was not, in fact, a part of the Church of God in Christ, they were afforded

the benefits given to credentialed ministers in the United States.⁴³ E. N. Bell, Arch P. Collins, Howard A. Goss, and Daniel C. O. Opperman—all affiliated with the non-credentialed Apostolic Faith Movement—were among some of the white Pentecostal leaders who used Mason’s Church of God in Christ name to acquire ministerial credentials.⁴⁴ In 1910, Leonard P. Adams formed another smaller white fellowship that also utilized Church of God in Christ credentials.⁴⁵ Thus, by supporting white ministers in his own denomination, practicing integration in revival meetings, and extending the benefits of accreditation to white, non-Church of God in Christ ministers, Mason served as an example of the continuation of Seymour’s message of interracial unity even beyond the Azusa revival.

Finally, Mason’s commitment to interracial unity is reflected in his rhetoric. Although he would often utilize a general unity rhetoric, at times Mason would be even more explicit in his denunciation of racism than Seymour was, who employed a more generalized rhetoric of unity. Unlike Seymour, Mason’s rhetoric often went beyond unity and, at times, directly attacked racism itself. In one of his sermons following a series of destructive storms that had swept the area, Mason explained that one town ravaged by the storm was destroyed as an act of divine judgment for its reputation for “race hatred.” Again, in the same sermon, he speaks of how “a colored child was carried by the storm and placed in a white man’s yard.”⁴⁶ Thus, for Mason, not only was the Church called to exhibit divine love between the races, but it was on God’s agenda to end the sin of racial segregation. This instance of Mason’s dealing directly with the problem of racism, as opposed to speaking solely in spiritual terms, is also reflective of his more pragmatic nature.

Conclusion

As we have seen, although the years following the initial outbreak of Pentecostal outpouring in Los Angeles brought a series of events challenging the sweeping sense of interracial unity felt at the Apostolic Faith Mission at Azusa Street, the Pentecostal message was beginning to take root and spread now from other centers across the United States. Not only was the message of Holy Spirit baptism, with the evidence of speaking in tongues, being preached, but in many cases the message of interracial unity was also being proclaimed. Since the movement in its rapid spread across the United States was becoming decentralized, this was of course done to varying degrees, depending on the situation.⁴⁷

While the Azusa Mission was becoming merely one of many centers of Pentecostal revival, William Seymour's influence on Pentecostalism should not be minimized. Not only did Seymour influence Pentecostalism around the nation through his travels, but the majority of the spread of Pentecostalism was spurred by preachers sent out from his mission. Finally, Seymour also maintained relationships with Pentecostal preachers. C. H. Mason, one of the primary voices calling for an end to racial antagonism and prophetically speaking against the sin of racism, was close friends with Seymour. They exhibited a mutual influence on one another. The two had met in 1905, before either had encountered Parham's message of Pentecost, and they remained close friends long after the initial outbreak of global Pentecostalism at Azusa Street. In fact, Seymour often attended the Church of God in Christ annual convocations.⁴⁸ Thus, among several others, Mason was able to continue Seymour's integrationist dimension of the Pentecostal message.

Notes

¹Larry Martin, *The Life and Ministry of William J. Seymour and a History of the Azusa Street Revival* (Joplin, MO: Christian Life Books, 1999), 301.

²Alice Reynolds Flower, "When Pentecost Came to Indianapolis: A First-hand Report of the Revival Which Began in 1907," *Heritage*, December 1, 1985, 5.

³Martin, *Life and Ministry*, 304. The practice of greeting one another with a kiss, or "holy kiss," as it was called, followed biblical precedent (e.g., Romans 16:16) and was a hallmark of Early Pentecostals' strivings to be completely biblical in their fellowship. Generally, this practice was limited to between members of the same sex.

⁴Martin, *Life and Ministry*, 301-10.

⁵Alice Reynolds Flower, "When Pentecost Came to Indianapolis," 7.

⁶Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 114.

⁷Ibid, 112-21; Joseph E. Campbell, *The Pentecostal Holiness Church: The First Fifty Years... Plus!* (Raleigh, NC: World Outlook Publications, 1951), 254-257. Though the majority of these associations accepted the Pentecostal message, sometimes there were opposers. For instance, A. B. Crumpler, leader of the Holiness Church, was against the new movement (partly because of his distrust of Cashwell, for unknown reasons), but, seeing that the majority of the ministers in the association had accepted Pentecostalism, he stepped down from leadership, allowing the association to become Pentecostal. See Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 118-20.

⁸Raybon Joel Newman, "Race and the Assemblies of God: The Journey from Azusa Street to the 'Miracle of Memphis'" (Ph.D. diss., University of Memphis, 2005), 103-4.

⁹Roger Robins, "A. J. Tomlinson: Plainfolk Modernist," in *Portraits of a Generation: Early Pentecostal Leaders*, ed. James R. Goff, Jr. and Grant Wacker (Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 2002), 359-60.

¹⁰James R. Goff, Jr., *Fields White Unto Harvest: Charles F. Parham and the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism* (Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 1988), 135, 133-5.

¹¹Newman, "Race and the Assemblies of God Church", 69-70.

¹²Goff, *Fields White Unto Harvest*, 143; Wayne E. Warner, "A Call for Love, Tolerance, and Cooperation," *Heritage*, September 1, 1994, 4.

¹³Edith Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith: The Assemblies of God, Pentecostalism, and American Culture* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 82-3.

¹⁴Ibid, 117; B. F. Lawrence, *The Apostolic Faith Restored: A History of the Present Latter Rain Outpouring of the Holy Spirit Known as the Apostolic or Pentecostal Movement* (St. Louis, MO: The Gospel Publishing House, 1916), 64.

¹⁵Qtd. in Martin, *The Life and Ministry*, 271.

¹⁶Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*, 83.

¹⁷Having official credentials issued by a recognized denomination gave Pentecostal ministers certain legal privileges, such as the authority to officiate weddings. Additionally, one of the main benefits for Pentecostal ministers being officially credentialed was the practice of offering discount rail passes to ordained ministers. This was especially significant for those traveling evangelists who would frequently travel by train. Even pastors of local congregations would also use trains to travel to and from different Pentecostal revival services and camp meetings. See Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 126.

¹⁸Qtd. in Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*, 83.

¹⁹E. N. Bell, "The Dramatic Testimony of a Baptist Pastor: E. N. Bell's 1908 Experience," *Heritage*, December 1995, 26-8.

²⁰Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*, 82. While by this time there had been a couple other Pentecostal newsletters bearing the name *Apostolic Faith*, they were not affiliated with one another. The *Apostolic Faith* based in Los Angeles had separated from the Texas-based *Apostolic Faith* movement upon Parham's denouncement of the Azusa revival in 1906. Then, in 1908, the Los Angeles *Apostolic Faith* was crippled when Clara Lum and Florence Crawford started a new operation, including a new *Apostolic Faith* newsletter, in Portland, Oregon. While the Los Angeles *Apostolic Faith* was published a few times after this, it was sporadic and eventually faded out. Meanwhile, Parham continued to publish his own *Apostolic Faith* newsletter from Kansas even after he was rejected as head of the *Apostolic Faith* movement. Thus, by the time Bell became publisher of the *Apostolic Faith* newsletter based in Houston, it was one of three separate Pentecostal newsletters bearing that name.

²¹Ibid., 82-3. In the early stages of Pentecostalism the term "Apostolic Faith" was synonymous with the modern designation of "Pentecostal," meaning one who believes in an experiential baptism in the Holy Spirit, which is manifested by speaking in unknown tongues.

²²See Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*, 76; "No Church Joining," *Word and Witness*, August 20, 1912, 2.

²³Jacob J. Frazee, "Notice to Preachers," *Word and Witness*, December 20, 1912, 1.

²⁴Martin, *Life and Ministry*, 220.

²⁵David Bundy, "G. T. Haywood: Religion for Urban Realities," in *Portraits of a Generation: Early Pentecostal Leaders*, ed. James R. Goff, Jr. and Grant Wacker (Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press, 2002), 247-8.

²⁶Campbell, *The Pentecostal Holiness Church*, 259. For reports of the Dunn meetings, see G. B. Cashwell, "Pentecost in North Carolina," *Apostolic Faith*, January, 1907, 1.

²⁷Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 128.

²⁸Roger Robins, "A. J. Tomlinson: Plainfolk Modernist," in *Portraits of a Generation: Early Pentecostal Leaders*, 365.

²⁹Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., "THE PAST: Historical Roots of Racial Unity and Division in American Pentecostalism," *Cyberjournal for Pentecostal-Charismatic Research* 14 (2005), <http://pctii.org/cyberj/cyberj14/robeck.html>.

³⁰Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*, 83.

³¹Ethel E. Goss, *The Winds of God: The Story of the Early Pentecostal Movement (1901-1914) in the Life of Howard A. Goss*, 2nd ed., edited by Ruth Goss Nortjé, (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1978), 184.

³²*Ibid*, 196.

³³M. M. Pinson, "Trip to the Southwest," *Word and Witness*, August 20, 1912, 1.

³⁴Wayne E. Warner, "Pinson, Mack M." in Stanley M. Burgess, ed., *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 989.

³⁵Elsie W. Mason, *The Man, Charles Harrison Mason (1866-1961)* (Memphis, TN: Church of God in Christ, 1979), 12-3.

³⁶Ithiel C. Clemmons, *Bishop C. H. Mason and the Roots of the Church of God in Christ*, Centennial ed. (Bakersfield, CA: Pneuma Life Publishing, 1996), 61; Ithiel C. Clemmons, "True Koinonia: Pentecostal Hopes and Historical Realities," *Pneuma* 4 (1981): 53

³⁷See Elijah J. Hill, *Women Come Alive: Biography of Mother Lizzie Robinson 1865-1945* (Arlington, TX: Perfecting the Kingdom International, 2005), 94, 123; See also C. H. Mason, *The History and Life Work of Elder C. H. Mason Chief Apostle and His Co-Laborers*, recompiled by Mary Mason (1924), 51, 100.

³⁸Clemmons, *Bishop C. H. Mason*, 64-6. One of the reasons the new group was able to keep the name of the original denomination is that Mason had been the source of

that name. The biography composed by his wife relates a story of how, when walking down a street, “the Lord revealed to him the name Church of God in Christ,” confirming it with its usage in a 1 Thessalonians 2:14. Elsie Mason, *The Man, Charles Harrison Mason*, 13.

³⁹Clemmons, *Bishop C. H. Mason*, 66.

⁴⁰C. H. Mason, *The History and Life Work*, 31.

⁴¹Qtd. in James Oglethorpe Patterson, *History and Formative Years of the Church of God in Christ: With Excerpts from the Life and Works of Its Founder, Bishop C. H. Mason* (Memphis, TN: Church of God in Christ Pub. House, 1969), 23.

⁴²In Dr. James L. Delk, *He Made Millions of People Happy* (Hopkinsville, KY: n.p., 1944), 9; qtd. in Bishop Ithiel Clemmons, “True Koinonia: Pentecostal Hopes and Historical Realities,” *Pneuma* 4 (1981): 54. See also C. H. Mason, *The History and Life Work*, 32.

⁴³Raybon Joel Newman, “Race and the Assemblies of God: The Journey from Azusa Street to the ‘Miracle of Memphis’” (Ph.D. diss., University of Memphis, 2005), 82-3.

⁴⁴Newman, “Race and the Assemblies of God,” 86.

⁴⁵David D. Daniels, “Charles Harrison Mason: The Interracial Impulse of Early Pentecostalism,” in *Portraits of a Generation: Early Pentecostal Leaders*, ed. James R. Goff, Jr. and Grant Wacker (Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 2002), 264-5.

⁴⁶C. H. Mason, “Storms—Storms—Storms,” in *The Man, Charles Harrison Mason*, by Elsie W. Mason, 23-4.

⁴⁷One example of Azusa Street’s loss of influence within the movement is reflected in J.R. Flower’s newsletter, *The Pentecost*, which included a directory of “Apostolic Faith” churches nationwide. While the first edition of the paper, in August, 1908, included the Apostolic Faith Mission in Los Angeles in the directory, by December, any mention of the Los Angeles mission was omitted. This is most likely due to Florence Crawford and Clara Lum’s move to Portland in the summer of 1908 and the subsequent demise of the *Apostolic Faith* newsletter published from Los Angeles. The September issue of *The Pentecost* first listed the Portland mission in its directory.

⁴⁸Clemmons, “True Koinonia,” 53; Martin, *Life and Ministry*, 313.

CHAPTER SIX

The Re-Drawing of “The Color Line”

In the decade from 1906 to 1916, the Pentecostal message spread rapidly, gaining both many adherents and many vicious critics. While Seymour’s vision for racial unity was embraced by most within the Pentecostal movement, at least to some degree, years of controversy caused the press for racial unity to lose its status as a central aspect of the movement. In fact, while the decade following the initial outbreak of the Azusa revival saw a rapid expansion of Pentecostalism in the United States, by 1916 the bulk of the movement had become predominately segregated. Of course, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, there were several notable examples of racial unity in the movement nationwide, even following the decline of the Azusa Street revival. Two significant exceptions to racial segregation were found in the Church of God and the Church of God in Christ, respectively. However, even these demonstrations of racial unity met with difficulty. This was especially true in regard to the Church of God in Christ. One of the primary factors contributing to the multiracial character of the Church of God in Christ, C. H. Mason’s extension of ministerial credentials to non-affiliated Pentecostal ministers, was severely handicapped in 1914, with the formation of the (mostly white) Assemblies of God. Eventually, these two separate groups—the Church of God in Christ and the Assemblies of God—grew into the two largest Pentecostal groups in America.¹ Thus, for much of Pentecostalism, the year 1914 marked the end of an era of remarkable interracial unity and the beginning of the re-segregation of the Pentecostal movement.

Because the end of widespread racial integration in early Pentecostalism was marked, at least to a significant degree, by the formation of the Assemblies of God in early 1914, some argue that this was in itself a racist act.² As one Pentecostal historian, Cecil Robeck, argues, the formation of the Assemblies of God in 1914 constituted “one of the most significant” symbols of the segregation of early Pentecostalism along race lines.³ While the formation of the Assemblies of God did result in a *de facto* racial segregation within the majority of Pentecostalism—one that persists in many ways even today—a closer look at the founding of the Assemblies of God reveals that the majority of those involved in the founding of the movement were by no means guilty of racial hatred, at least not overtly. In fact, those within the Assemblies of God maintained a rhetoric of unity and love, even when breaking away from their African American brothers in the Church of God in Christ. The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the rhetoric surrounding the formation of the Assemblies of God in 1914, demonstrating not only its contribution to racial segregation within the American Pentecostal movement, but also to examine the ways in which the leaders of the newly formed denomination were able to maintain the typical Pentecostal rhetoric of unity and love, while still enacting virtual segregation in a movement once noted for its racial harmony. I will begin with a brief history of the events surrounding the Assemblies of God formation in the early spring of 1914. This will be followed by an analysis of the rhetoric of early Assemblies of God leaders. Finally, the chapter will close with a discussion of continued racial segregation in the movement

The Assemblies of God General Council

The Assemblies of God organization began as a group of ministers that first met in April, 1914, in response to a call, issued by five Pentecostal leaders—Howard Goss, Mack M. Pinson, Eudorus N. Bell, Arch Collins, and D. C. O. Opperman—to convene for a General Council in Hot Springs, Arkansas.⁴ This meeting, which drew at least 120 Pentecostal ministers, besides missionaries and lay workers, lasted for ten days, with three days set aside for prayer and the final seven dedicated to the logistics of founding the association. Of course, though the meeting was termed a “General Council,” the demographic of those who joined the Assemblies of God was overwhelmingly white. In fact, there was not a single black minister among those first credentialed by the new organization. Ellsworth S. Thomas was the only African American minister credentialed with the Assemblies of God during their early years, and he was not ordained until 1915, a year after the first General Council. Moreover, his name was followed with the designation “(colored)” in the denomination’s official roster. Thus, even this sole exception to racial homogeneity affirmed the distinction that those within the Assemblies of God made between black and white ministers.⁵

The first General Council convened in the midst of great controversy, and the wording of the Constitution of the newly formed cooperation of ministers reflects this. Interestingly, though, the controversy surrounding the General Council was not one of racial integration vs. segregation. Rather, many were initially opposed to the Assemblies of God in fear that increased organization would lead to the waning of Pentecostal renewal and the stifling of spiritual freedom within the movement. Many early Pentecostals were influenced by the anti-denominationalism of their predecessors in the

Holiness movement. These felt that organizational structure not only restricted liberty for “the Spirit to move,” so to speak, but also segregated the universal Church. To overcome this anti-denominational sentiment, the founders of the Assemblies of God were careful to highlight a rhetoric of unity, as well as to focus on the effectiveness of a cooperative organization. Thus, the reasons developed for holding the 1914 General Council reflected two themes: unity and effectiveness.⁶

For example, even the minutes of the first Assemblies of God General Council explicitly stated the existence of the association to be for the purpose of greater “convenience, unity, and fellowship” among Pentecostal missions.⁷ Interestingly, though, it was not only independent, unaffiliated Pentecostal congregations who formed the Assemblies of God. In fact, the majority of the inaugural Assemblies of God ministers—including all five who issued the call for the General Council—were already previously affiliated, many with the Church of God in Christ denomination; and the call itself, publicized in E. N. Bell’s *Word & Witness* newsletter, was addressed first to those specifically in the Church of God in Christ, and then also “to all Pentecostal or Apostolic Faith Assemblies.”⁸ At the time of the General Council in Hot Springs in 1914, Howard Goss was leading a thriving Pentecostal congregation there, under the Church of God in Christ organizational banner, and other primary leaders responsible for the first General Council were also part of the Church of God in Christ.⁹ However, the predominately white churches of the denomination, such as those led by Goss, were permitted to act as a group autonomously from the main branch of the Church of God in Christ. Having even their own newsletter and holding their own camp meetings, most white ministers in the Church of God in Christ network decided to remain segregated from their African

American brothers. This was of course made official during the General Council of 1914. Thus, by this time, the Pentecostal movement as a whole was changing from a unified single movement to a splintered array of denominations and various associations, among them being the Assemblies of God.¹⁰

One of the reasons that this purported unity failed to include the entirety of the Pentecostal movement is that one of the primary foundations of this unification was doctrinal. In particular, though it was not mentioned in the call for the first General Council as one of the explicit reasons for gathering, the new group held as one of its primary teachings the “Finished Work” doctrine, first promulgated by William Durham. In fact, the first keynote address at the Council itself, delivered by M. M. Pinson, was a sermon on the importance of Christ’s “Finished Work” on Calvary. Thus, contrary to Seymour and Mason, the Assemblies of God adopted the theological position of Durham in denying the intermediary sanctification experience between salvation and the baptism in the Holy Spirit.¹¹ While at first, in sensitivity to anti-denominationalists, the leaders of the Assemblies of God did not lay out a clear doctrinal stance for the group, by 1916 a document titled the Statement of Fundamental Truths had been drafted, outlining the specific doctrines of the group.¹²

Among other significant events happening during the ten-day General Council was an address by Mason himself. According to the *Word and Witness* newsletter—circulated to the missions and churches who would become members of the Assemblies of God—Bishop C. H. Mason was present at the Council in 1914 and “blessed the council in its actions for God.”¹³ Interestingly, though this was an address given to an audience composed primarily of white ministers who were in the process of leaving his

denomination, all reports of the address seemed to reflect an overwhelmingly positive tone. While a full transcript of the message was not recorded, all accounts of the message reflected a typical Pentecostal sermon and no sign of animosity between Mason and the new group. Ithiel Clemmons, a historian and bishop in the COGIC, writes that Mason used “an unusually shaped sweet potato” as a visual aid “illustrating the wonders of God,” and also brought with him an African American choir from Mississippi to back him as he sang spontaneous improvisations of Negro spirituals. Clemmons also adds that Mason “bid the white leaders a warm farewell and gave them leave to void their Church of God in Christ credentials in order to switch to those of their new denomination.”¹⁴

Other, more structurally related, actions made by the Council in 1914 included the adoption of E. N. Bell’s *Word and Witness* monthly newsletter as the “official organ” of the association and the designation of J. Roswell Flower’s *Christian Evangel* as a weekly newsletter.¹⁵ J. Roswell Flower was converted to Pentecostalism at Glenn Cook’s revival meetings in Indianapolis. Following Flower’s Pentecostal experience in 1907, he was ordained by the World’s Faith Missionary Association, with which William Durham had at one time been involved. It was at that time that he began publishing a Pentecostal newsletter, the *Christian Evangel*. The name of the newsletter morphed from *Christian Evangel* to *Pentecostal Evangel* to *Weekly Evangel*, the name the newsletter held in 1914, when it was adopted by the Assemblies of God.¹⁶ Of those represented at the first General Council, there were also several others who were publishing newsletters on a weekly or monthly basis. Among the provisions of the first General Council was a conglomeration of these various independent Pentecostal papers into either the *Christian Evangel* or the *Word and Witness*, in an effort to better implement the diverse resources of those

present.¹⁷ Eventually, these two newsletters were also consolidated, and the publication of this newsletter continues today, under the name of *Today's Pentecostal Evangel*.

A loose governing body for the group was also established. Nationally, the association was led by a General Chairman, and one of the organizers of the first meeting, E. N. Bell, was the first to fill this post.¹⁸ Bell was assisted by J. Roswell Flower as the General Secretary/Treasurer. Interestingly, as evidence of the importance of newsletters in advancing Pentecostalism in its early stages, these two executive posts were filled by the respective editors of the two Assemblies of God newsletters. In addition to these two executive posts, a body of Executive Presbyters was also formed to help make decisions about the direction of the group. This group, comprised of 18 members, included ministers such as Mack M. Pinson, H. G. Rodgers, T. K. Leonard, and Howard Goss, most of whom had at one time been credentialed with the Church of God in Christ. Also, starting in 1914, the Assemblies of God began to issue its own ministerial credentials. Leonard was made responsible for issuing the Assemblies of God credentials to ministers in the East and Goss issued them to workers in the West. By the fall of that year, Leonard and Goss had already licensed 512 workers using Assemblies of God credentials.¹⁹

After coming together in the General Council in the spring of 1914, Assemblies of God ministers met together in regional camp meetings throughout the ensuing months and also formed district councils to promote increased affiliation on the state and regional levels. These councils, which today are organized for the most part by state, helped to increase the local presence of a national affiliation. Even on a national level, though, the two Assemblies of God newsletters helped to keep all Assemblies of God ministers abreast of important happenings and the advance of the Assemblies of God movement.

Also important were the essays in these newsletters—primarily in the *Word and Witness*—which cultivated a similar way of thinking among Assemblies of God ministers. Thus, though an official doctrinal statement was not adopted until 1916—two years after the formation of the association—the same way of thinking among Assemblies of God ministers was cultivated by the increased fellowship during the regional camp meetings and by the circulation of the two Assemblies of God newsletters.²⁰

While both unity and uniformity were being encouraged by these functions of the association, this is not to claim that the movement was at first doctrinally homogeneous in any way. While a large part of Assemblies of God ministers came directly from the Church of God in Christ denomination, even those within that denomination came from differing backgrounds. Some of these had once ministered under Charles Parham, and then eventually became credentialed under C. H. Mason after Parham's scandal weakened the Apostolic Faith branch of Pentecostalism. Others were also previously credentialed through the Church of God in Christ, but had received Pentecostalism directly as a result of Pentecostal evangelists going out from the Azusa Street revival. Then there were also those like J. Roswell Flower, who had no affiliation with the Church of God in Christ whatsoever. One of the few doctrines that Assemblies of God ministers shared in common, besides the basic message of Pentecostalism and the basic tenets of orthodox Christianity, was that of Durham's Finished Work doctrine. At the same time, though, even the agreement on orthodox Christian belief within the Assemblies of God was a subject of huge debate. Even before the first General Council, many ministers who would become credentialed with the Assemblies of God were beginning to adopt a non-traditional view of God that challenged the orthodox Trinitarian understanding. While the

vast majority of Christians, dating back to Tertullian, one of the early Church Fathers, affirm that the deity is composed of three persons—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—some Pentecostals were beginning to emphasize the role of Jesus within the three-person Godhead. Eventually, this emphasis on Jesus morphed into a doctrine that claimed the unity of God as one person, denying the Trinitarian nature of God. Besides these theological variations, this affected “Oneness,” or “Jesus Only” Pentecostals, as they are called, in practical ways. Most significant was their change in water baptism. Characteristic of “Oneness” Pentecostals was their use of Jesus’ name only as the authority for water baptism, as opposed to the traditional invocation of “the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (or Holy Ghost).” A more fundamental shift in thinking was reflected by Oneness Pentecostals expectation that salvation, sanctification, and infilling of the Spirit of God all occurred simultaneously at the point of baptism.²¹

Within just a few years, the “Oneness” doctrine had grown significantly in number of adherents, especially among those who had already adopted Durham’s Finished Work doctrine. Durham’s teachings already had laid a foundation for this unorthodox view among Pentecostals in its emphasis on Jesus and in the combining of spiritual crisis experiences, making the baptism of the Holy Spirit an increasingly central aspect of Christian life. In response to the growing popularity of this new theology, especially within the Assemblies of God, Trinitarian leaders responded by clarifying the triune nature of God. It was as a result of this controversy that, on October 6, 1916, the Statement of Fundamental Truths of the Assemblies of God, which explicitly championed Trinitarian doctrine, was drafted.²²

This act was met with much controversy, with some people claiming that the statement replaced the Bible as the final authority on doctrine.²³ Moreover, as a result of the Oneness doctrine, the Assemblies of God endured a major split. Just two years after its formation, over 25% of its credentialed ministers left to form a new non-Trinitarian association. Some of these were influential leaders within the movement, including Goss, Rodgers, and D. C. O. Opperman. Even E. N. Bell had courted the new teaching for a time. In November 1914, Bell resigned from his chair, with Arch Collins succeeding him. However, after a short time, Bell came to re-embrace the doctrine of the Trinity and was later re-elected to serve as General Chairman of the movement, though this was several years later. Interestingly, the Assemblies of God also lost many of its few African American ministers as a result of this split. Moreover, Garfield T. Haywood, one of the few major black leaders who affiliated himself with the Assemblies of God, rejected the association as a result of this doctrinal dispute. Although Haywood had never actually joined the Assemblies of God in an official capacity and was not credentialed by them, he had some relationship with the association, as he was asked to serve on a panel in 1915 debating the validity of the Oneness teaching. However, his relationship with the Assemblies of God, in whatever capacity, was short-lived, as he broke off fellowship with the Assemblies in 1916, along with others sharing his non-Trinitarian beliefs.²⁴

Garfield Haywood's unique, and short-lived, relationship with the Assemblies of God fellowship provides a very intriguing case study into the nature of race relations within the new association of Assemblies of God. The presence of at least a few African American ministers within the association makes any claim of explicit racism or even deliberate total segregation within the organization difficult to defend. Moreover, the

invitation for Haywood to participate in a panel debating the response of the Assemblies of God to the “Oneness” doctrine was also significant. While Haywood’s position supporting the Oneness doctrine was ultimately rejected, the fact that he was given a voice was nonetheless an exception to the white paternalism that was typical in America, both North and South. On the other hand, the failure of the Assemblies of God to maintain, or even accept, any more than just a few African Americans in the organization falls far short of Seymour’s original vision for racial reconciliation and unity. As Edith Blumhofer writes in her history of Pentecostalism, and especially of the Assemblies of God, “At first heavily southern, and frequently led nationally by men of southern birth, the denomination failed to attract a sizable African-American membership.”²⁵ Moreover, the decision of the leaders of the Assemblies of God to depart from the covering of a racially mixed organization signifies a large shift within Pentecostalism from being racially mixed to racially segregated. Thus, while the majority of Assemblies of God leaders were an exception to the racist climate of their culture, at least to a degree, any evidence of a significant unity between black and white was nonetheless absent. A look at the rhetoric of the founders and early leaders of the Assemblies of God should help to bring clarification to the nature of race relations within the movement at this time.

Analysis of Early Assemblies of God Rhetoric

While it would surely be inaccurate to claim that the Assemblies of God was an organization infused with racial hatred, the association formed in 1914 did nonetheless fall short of complete racial unity and cooperation. Of course, one of the most telling aspects of this was the Assemblies of God leaders’ unwillingness to work with C. H. Mason and the Church of God in Christ denomination. Thus, a look at the rhetoric concerning race

relations within the early Assemblies of God must begin first with the General Council held in April of 1914. As mentioned earlier, the meeting of the first General Council was precipitated with some controversy, primarily from those Pentecostals who were against sectarianism and denominationalism. Thus, one of the primary messages of those calling for the Hot Springs General Council in 1914 was that they “should not organize a new sect nor charter a new denomination.”²⁶ In fact, to this day, while the Assemblies of God functions in much the same way as a denomination, it does not consider itself as such, but rather is a fellowship of ministers. While, on one level, the rhetoric of unity and efficacy served to defuse arguments against denominationalism, it also served to rhetorically blur the sense of division caused by the large number of ministers leaving the Church of God in Christ. Moreover, coupled with this rhetoric was one that served to downplay any previous association with Mason’s group. After all, if a previous interracial structure could be denied, then any sense of re-segregation would lose its foundation. Thus, for the sake of rhetorically disavowing racial disunity, the narrative of the formation of the Assemblies of God had to be framed as a group of ministers coming together from a variety of disorganized and only loosely affiliated Pentecostal groups. This narrative would counter the contrasting history, picked up by later historians, that the Assemblies of God was primarily a break from the racially integrated Church of God in Christ.²⁷ Thus, here I will analyze two narratives crucial for the Assemblies of God in denying any explicit break from the Pentecostal vision for interracial unity. The first of these narratives downplays any previous affiliation with the Church of God in Christ. The second narrative stresses the ecumenical, non-denominational nature of the new Assemblies of God association.

The rhetoric of anti-denominationalism prior to 1914 ironically served to explain in many ways the exodus of white ministers from within the Church of God in Christ to form the Assemblies of God. An example of this comes from a *Word and Witness* article from 1912, before the formation of the Assemblies of God, titled “Not Missions, but Churches of God in Christ.” The article talked about the folly of naming a church after a certain sect or group, even of calling it Pentecostal. Instead, it espoused the name “Church of God” or “Church of God in Christ” as an appropriate name for all churches. Even before the formation of the Assemblies of God, Pinson’s branch of the Church of God in Christ did not see the name “Church of God in Christ” as having any real significance regarding actual fellowship or jurisdiction. Rather, it was a convenient way to be part of the greater Body of Christ: the Church universal, so to speak.²⁸ Most white ministers from the Church of God in Christ who later joined the Assemblies of God believed that the Church of God in Christ name was merely a proper name to refer to what they felt was a true church: a non-sectarian local unit of the universal Christian Church. Thus, most of the early Pentecostals, especially those who left to form the Assemblies of God, did not feel strong ties to Mason’s denomination, necessarily; rather, their convictions led them to identify only with the Church universal, as they conceived it.²⁹

Consequently, because of the anti-denominationalism of the white members of the Church of God in Christ, the significance of the association’s formation was not fully realized. This was of course crucial in protecting the Assemblies of God from any self-accusation of racism. Instead of the Assemblies of God founders seeing themselves as white ministers breaking from an African-American-led denomination, they saw themselves as meeting a need for greater cooperation between Pentecostal congregations

that was not currently being met. Despite the majority of the Assemblies of God congregations at one time having been part of the Church of God in Christ, the founders of the Assemblies of God claimed that, prior to its formation in 1914, “individualism [had] been the human order of the day,” with the negative effect that “Scriptural co-operation and fellowship which go far to guarantee the presence and power of God [had] not been realized in the past in its fullest measure.”³⁰ They did not consider themselves merely a break from the Church of God in Christ, but rather recognized themselves as being “from local Churches of God in Christ, Assemblies of God, and various Apostolic Faith Missions and Churches, and Full Gospel Pentecostal missions.”³¹ Accordingly, they saw as their role to “appropriate the divine order” by uniting congregations under the Assemblies of God association, in order to “experience the divine presence and power” of God that comes with Christian unity.³² Thus, ostensibly, the Assemblies of God was formed not as a schism from a pre-existing denomination, but rather as an independent association created to fulfill the need for “co-operation, fellowship and unity” among the early adherents to Pentecostalism.³³

Even in the “Preamble and Resolution of Constitution” of the Assemblies of God drafted during the first General Council, the delegates agreed that one of the reasons for the formation of the Assemblies of God was “that there should be no schism (division, sectarianism) in” the Church.³⁴ Defending against any notion that the Assemblies of God itself was a schism within the Pentecostal movement was the claim that, before 1914 the movement had “no man nor set of men at the head of it but God to guide and mold it into clean cut Scriptural paths.”³⁵ This statement of course minimizes the importance of previous Pentecostal leaders in directing the movement. Even when referencing previous

organizations, the writers of the Assemblies of God constitution treated them very casually. Even when congregations utilized other organizations in their names, the preamble simply called for all formerly Churches of God in Christ, Apostolic Faith Mission, Assemblies of God, and etc. congregations to begin calling themselves “by the general scriptural name ‘Assemblies of God.’³⁶ Allegedly, this was “for the purpose of being more Scriptural and also legal in transacting business.”³⁷ In another part of the document, one “Miscellaneous Resolution” stated the following: “the work which has been done hitherto in the Interstate Camp Meeting of the Churches of God in Christ, has been committed to the General Council of the Assemblies of God,” though it did not explain in the document how, or by whom, this had been done.³⁸

Interestingly, during the first General Council, Mason attended as an observer and was also asked to address the gathering on one of the evenings. It is not entirely clear why he attended, but at least one reason was to give leave to the large number of white ministers removing themselves from his denomination.³⁹ Strategically, the special report in the *Word and Witness* newsletter does not focus on the content of his message, but rather vaguely states that Mason, “a real prophet of God, also in the power of the Spirit blessed the council in its actions.”⁴⁰ Thus, the racial nature of the split from the Church of God in Christ denomination was generally ignored.

While this rhetoric minimized the previous associations from which Assemblies of God ministers had come, there was also a sense in which the formality of the Assemblies of God association itself was also de-emphasized. Other ways in which this occurred was the lack of any explicit statement of doctrinal belief for the association. In fact, the Statement of Fundamental Truths, the association’s doctrinal statement was not drafted

until 1916, two years after the Assemblies of God had been organized. Even so, this Statement was also met with controversy, particularly from those who held to the Oneness doctrine that the Statement denied. Descriptions about the first meeting also reflect the general sentiment that the Assemblies of God was not a new denomination. W. F. Carothers, who was unable to attend the first meeting, but quickly became involved in the organization, writes that the activities of the Council were acceptable, as long as the new association accomplished its stated purpose of “ensuring Bible order and [the] promotion of ministries without making a sect or another denomination.”⁴¹

The emphasis on effectiveness was another way in which the structural formality of the Assemblies of God was downplayed. Rather than being a schism or a new denomination, the Assemblies of God was simply portrayed as an association of ministers who worked together for practicality in fulfilling the Christian mandate to spread the Gospel all over the world. For early Pentecostals, this emphasis on efficiency in preaching the Gospel was especially appealing, in many ways due to their conviction that the Second Coming was near. It is for this reason that “convenience,” or practicality, served as one of the three pillars legitimating the founding of the association.⁴² Reflecting this was the great emphasis in the First General Council focused on the “Missionary Problem.” One of the ways in which the Assemblies of God would increase effectiveness in propagating the Pentecostal message was by providing Pentecostal missionaries the necessary funding support needed to accomplish their work. Besides providing necessary legal credentials for these missionaries, the Assemblies of God would also be instrumental in helping to fund them. One of the great concerns expressed by delegates to the Council was that many Pentecostal missionaries were currently affiliated with non-Pentecostal

denominations. The delegates feared that these denominations would not only remove support from these missionaries, but that they would also expel the missionaries and then confiscate existing stations that Pentecostal missionaries had built.⁴³ The association would also serve to recognize Pentecostal missionaries so that they could be better connected with Pentecostal supporters. This was also reflected in the decision to consolidate several independent Pentecostal newsletters. It was implied that the work could be managed more effectively if these smaller newsletters were consolidated. Thus, one of the underlying themes of the newly formed association was to help alleviate practical problems. Finally, the emphasis on effectiveness also demonstrates, at least to a degree, why interracial unity was never a part of the agenda for delegates to the first General Council of the Assemblies of God. Since interracial unity does not always help effectiveness, but rather invites more controversy, Seymour's transcendental vision for racial harmony had no place among the practical rationale for forming the Assemblies of God. Thus, the emphasis on practicality and effectiveness served both to exclude a call for interracial unity, as well as to downplay the sectarian, or denominational, nature of the newly formed association. Thus, it was implicitly argued that, since neither the Church of God in Christ nor the new Assemblies of God were sectarian associations, there really was no division, racial or otherwise. All Pentecostals were simply part of the universal Church (or Assembly) of God, which of course was in Christ. In this way, the founders of the Assemblies of God were able to allow (and to implicitly encourage) racial segregation, mainly through the founding of an alternative, racially homogeneous association, while at the same time denying the effect of segregation produced by its existence.

Considering that the majority of early Assemblies of God leaders were by no means explicitly racist, nor were all of them committed to segregation, the rhetoric of the first General Council is very significant.⁴⁴ As a whole, the delegates to the General Council made no specific statement concerning race, at least not at the meeting in 1914. For this reason, it is important to look at other aspects of their rhetoric, namely the narratives examined above to determine how the first General Council helped both to deflect any suspicion of outright racism, as well as to lay the foundation for a segregated, mostly white network of ministers. Instead of deliberately attempting to continue racial integration within the movement, the Assemblies of God reflected the cultural norms of its time.

While the first General Council did not demonstrate any vocal commitment either to segregation or integration, this issue was dealt with directly later on. In particular, the *Weekly Evangel*, which was by then one of the two official organs of the Assemblies of God, carried an article in August of 1915 written by W. F. Carothers that defended the segregation of Assemblies of God churches in the South. This article is significant for several reasons. For one, it gives us an idea of the state of race relations within the early Assemblies of God. Because the General Council never dealt explicitly with race, the attitude toward integration varied widely within the movement. While the association as a whole ordained only a few African American ministers (less than 1%) in its early years, some of the Assemblies of God congregations outside of the South invited African American members into their congregations. The Assemblies of God in the South, though, did not allow for integration. Secondly, Carothers' article provides an interesting example of the rhetoric used to provide the rationale for segregation among Pentecostals.

Carothers' own attitude toward African Americans was intriguing. We know that he visited at least one African American Pentecostal mission (though probably more) during his life. Interestingly, in the single account available, it is recorded that he felt compelled to bring clarification to a message the preacher at the African American mission was giving.⁴⁵ Thus, while Carothers most likely had some relationships with African American Pentecostals, it is doubtful that he would ever submit to an African American leader. At the same time, Carothers was very much in favor of racial segregation. In fact, in an earlier article, from 1906, he even claimed that God used racial hatred to maintain the distinction between the different races. To that end, he wrote, "This intensified racial impulse is mistaken by many outsiders for prejudice, or a work of the devil, when in truth it is the work of God's Holy Spirit, and as such is binding upon all Christians."⁴⁶ Interestingly, he nonetheless assumed that, being sanctified, he was "incapable of prejudice, loving the colored man's soul equally as much as the white man's;" and thus, this served as the enthymemic premise for the validity of his racialized views. Because of this sense of self-justification, he deemed it "impossible for [the] Northern brethren" to understand the validity of his segregationist actions.⁴⁷

The article published in the *Weekly Evangel* reflected this stance and also attempted to speak for the rest of "Pentecostal Whites," at least in the Assemblies of God congregations in the South. In the article, Carothers expounded his doctrine that racial distinctions were God-ordained, using the Biblical passage stating that God made all men "of one blood."⁴⁸ Though God made all men of one blood, he argued, he also made men of different races. He thus concluded, that, "If our God had intended for men to have only one color, as he did that they should have only one blood, doubtless he would have

attended to that in the making of the nations.”⁴⁹ At the same time, though, while Carothers held a strictly segregationist stance, he also condemned slavery (mainly because of the displacement of Africans to a “white” country) and also maintained that he and other Southern proponents of segregation were neither prejudiced nor biased against African Americans. In fact, he states explicitly that the article “is not prejudice.” Rather, he simply wanted to maintain the “divine arrangement” of race separation among Pentecostals, comparing it to a proper separation between the sexes.⁵⁰ At the same time, he did acknowledge that there were people who were prejudiced against those of other races, but he and other Southern Pentecostals were, of course, not among them. In closing the article, he wrote:

Let our Northern brethren be assured that the Pentecostal people of the South, while conforming cheerfully to the generally wholesome regulations made necessary in the South, have not the slightest prejudice or lack of divine love for the colored people, nor is there any lack of mutual interest in the work they are doing and in their spiritual welfare. They generally get along better with the Lord than we do.⁵¹

Thus, Carothers and other Assemblies of God congregations conformed to the Southern system of racial segregation, while still holding that they had not abandoned the Pentecostal standard of love for all men. Moreover, this article was significant not just for Carothers, but also was a reflection of the Assemblies of God association, and of the majority of the Pentecostal movement. Looking back on this article, Cecil Robeck, Pentecostal historian and ecumenical leader, wrote, “A trajectory had been set down which path the Assemblies of God would now proceed.”⁵² And, as Edith Blumhofer, notes, “Though they claimed to revere black Pentecostals such as Charles Mason, Thoro Harris, and Garfield T. Haywood, most white Pentecostals did so at a distance.”⁵³ Thus, though Assemblies of God leaders did not see themselves as denying the call to love men

of all races as brothers, many Assemblies of God congregations re-instated segregation within the Pentecostal movement. Moreover, due to pressure from Southern churches, the association as a whole remained, for the most part, segregated.

Race Relations in the Pentecostal Movement Post-1914

Besides the exodus of many white ministers from the Church of God in Christ to form the Assemblies of God in 1914, the nature of race relations among Pentecostals was changing on other fronts as well. Another highly symbolic event, happening just one month after the Assemblies of God General Council, was the decision of Seymour and his associates to limit leadership positions at the Azusa Street Mission to blacks. While this was primarily a response to the recalcitrance of white ministers and the devastating effects they had on the mission, this was nonetheless a huge blow to the Pentecostal commitment to spiritual unity among people of all races.

Also, the Pentecostal Holiness Church, formed only a few years earlier, failed to initiate any integration. This was due primarily to the fact that Pentecost was primarily the introduction of a new doctrine—speaking in tongues—to a pre-existing (white) denomination. Though G. B. Cashwell himself, a leader of the movement, had experienced a spirit-inspired cleansing from prejudice, he preached nothing distinctly Pentecostal that was new to his Holiness association. Beyond speaking in tongues, nothing really changed. Interestingly, Cashwell left the Pentecostal movement in 1909, returning to the Methodist Church.⁵⁴

Moreover, even in the Assemblies of God, the system of segregation was becoming ever more ubiquitous. Apparently, Lee Hawkins, P. W. Williams and Ellsworth S. Thomas (Binghamton, NY) were among the only African American ministers in the

Assemblies of God during its early years.⁵⁵ Also, there was another “Brother Smith,” who led a “colored” Assembly of God church in Austin, Texas, which was segregated from the other two assemblies in Austin, which were attended by whites. However, by January, 1916, none of the aforementioned African American ministers—Smith, Williams, Haywood, or Hawkins—were listed in the “Ministerial List of the General Council of the Assemblies of God.”⁵⁶ While it is recorded that Hawkins had his credentials removed, due to charges of a “serious nature,” what happened to the other three African American Assemblies of God ministers is not known, though it is likely that they may have left due to the Oneness doctrine.⁵⁷ Even overseas, missionaries with the Assemblies of God acquiesced to prevailing cultural norms in regard to race. One missionary from South Africa reported that they had “two mission halls”—one for each race.⁵⁸ The same was also true in the Fiji Islands.⁵⁹ Another Assemblies of God missionary wrote that, among the *sins* of the people of the Dominican Republic, whites and blacks inter-marry one another. In direct contradiction to the message of Azusa Street, where whites and blacks were brought together in spiritual unity, this Assemblies of God missionary claimed God’s judgment on this type of integration.⁶⁰

Even in rare cases of racial integration, the Assemblies of God maintained a clear distinction between black and white. In 1917, an Assemblies of God church in Coffeyville, Kansas, was part of a spontaneous, citywide awakening. As Nellie Wright reports in the *Weekly Evangel*, however, they “were surprised when it came, as God sent His humble servant Ozero Jones, a colored brother from Fort Smith, Arkansas, to take care of it.” Despite the fact that the leader was a black man, the church accepted it. Explaining further, Wright writes the following: “There is no white pastor or evangelist

here. We feel if there were, more of the whites might accept. While there are many white and colored people attending the service, more of the colored people are accepting the truth. . . . We would be glad if some of the brethren living near would visit the meeting.”⁶¹

Conclusion

In conclusion, the year 1914 was a significant year in marking the redrawing of “the color line” in the Pentecostal movement. Though this line was being redrawn, it was rarely done explicitly, and not always deliberately. As Douglas Jacobsen writes, “It would be wrong to argue that race was determinative” in the formation of the Assemblies of God from within the affiliation of the Church of God in Christ.⁶² However, race did play at least some role in the formation of the new (racially segregated) affiliations and denominations, even if unconsciously. Although the emerging racial segregation of Pentecostalism (at least *de facto*) is understandable considering the historical context of the movement in the middle of the Jim Crow era, the abandonment of Azusa Street’s countercultural commitment to integration and unity is nonetheless lamentable—and, in fact, “was tragic and diminished the movement as a whole.”⁶³ This is especially true considering that Pentecostals were already “upsetting many traditional church attitudes” and had an “anti-establishment spirit [that] allowed Pentecostals to do what ‘socially-proper’ people would not do, enabling them to disregard community racial standards.”⁶⁴ However, in the case of race relations, Pentecostals failed to keep racial unity as a central aspect of the movement.

Although the Assemblies of God did carry Carothers’ 1915 article in the *Weekly Evangel* explaining the Southerners’ stance toward segregation, most hindrances to

interracial unity were more implicit. Even in the calling of the first General Council, the leaders of the new association utilized specific rhetorical strategies to frame the Assemblies of God as a new organization, not one that had come out from within the Church of God in Christ. In summary, the preceding analysis of the early rhetoric of the Assemblies of God shows how its leaders utilized two narratives of ecumenism to deny implications of schism, the first downplaying its ministers' previous role with the Church of God in Christ and the second denying the denominational function of the Assemblies of God. However, while the rhetoric of the first General Council served to deny any racism, or even segregation, on the part of its founders, the formation of the Assemblies of God nonetheless was one of the major steps in redrawing "the color line" in the early Pentecostal movement.

Notes

¹Based on a 2003 poll reported in the *2005 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches*, the Church of God in Christ reported 5.4 million adherents, while the Assemblies of God reported about 2.7 million. While the Church of God in Christ is significantly more populous in the United States, the Assemblies of God has a larger population globally. “Top Ten Largest Religious Bodies in the United States,” Adherents.com, http://www.adherents.com/reL_USA.html.

²See Cecil M. Robeck, “The PAST: Historical Roots of Racial Unity and Division in American Pentecostalism,” *CyberJournal for Pentecostal-Charismatic Research* 14 (2005), <http://pctii.org/cyberj/cyberj14/robeck.html>.

³ Douglas Jacobsen, *Thinking in the Spirit: Theologies of the Early Pentecostal Movement* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003), 261.

⁴See Edith Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith: The Assemblies of God, Pentecostalism, and American Culture* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 82-3 for a brief description of each of these men.

⁵Ibid, 247; Howard N. Kenyon, “Black Ministers in the Assemblies of God: Ellsworth S. Thomas First Black Minister Credentialed in 1915,” *Heritage* 7 (1987): 10.

⁶For further exploration on the stated reasons for founding the Assemblies of God, see “Delegates Form Assemblies of God: 300 People Attend 10-Day Organizational Meeting in Hot Springs,” *Heritage*, Summer 1984, 5.

⁷E. N. Bell, “General Council Special,” *Word and Witness* 10, no. 6 (1914): 1, col. 1.

⁸E. N. Bell, “General Convention of Pentecostal Saints and Churches of God in Christ Hot Springs, Arkansas, April 2 to 12, 1914,” *Word and Witness*, December 1913, 1.

⁹Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*, 117.

¹⁰See David D. Daniels, “Charles Harrison Mason: The Interracial Impulse of Early Pentecostalism,” in *Portraits of a Generation: Early Pentecostal Leaders*, ed. James R. Goff, Jr. and Grant Wacker (Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 2002), 264-5.

¹¹Newman, “Race and the Assemblies of God,” 12.

¹²Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*, 133-4.

¹³Bell, “General Council Special,” 1, col. 3.

¹⁴Ithiel C. Clemmons, *Bishop C. H. Mason and the Roots of the Church of God in Christ*, Centennial ed. (Bakersfield, CA: Pneuma Life Publishing, 1996), 71.

¹⁵Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*, 119.

¹⁶Alice Flower, interview by Del Tarr, *The Early Years*, CD-ROM, Gospel Publishing House, 2006; Raybon Joel Newman, "Race and the Assemblies of God Church: The Journey from Azusa Street to the 'Miracle of Memphis'" (Ph.D. diss., University of Memphis, 2005), 95.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Later, this title was changed to General Superintendent. This title is still used today.

¹⁹Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*, 123.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Douglas Jacobsen, *Thinking in the Spirit: Theologies of the Early Pentecostal Movement* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003), 195.

²²Ibid.

²³Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*, 134.

²⁴Raybon Joel Newman, "Race and the Assemblies of God Church," 95.

²⁵Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*, 246-7.

²⁶E. N. Bell, "General Council Special," *Word and Witness* October, 1914, 1.

²⁷Cf. Ethel E. Goss, *The Winds of God: The Story of the Early Pentecostal Movement (1901-1914) in the Life of Howard A. Goss*, 2nd ed., edited by Ruth Goss Nortjé, (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1978), 262-3.

²⁸"Not Missions, but Churches of God in Christ," *Word and Witness*, August, 1912.

²⁹Cf. "No Church Joining," *Word and Witness*, August 20, 1912, 2. Moreover, even the name Assemblies of God was used pre-1914, being that it was a "biblical" name, albeit its claim to "biblical" precedence was made in a more erudite way. While the actual term "assemblies of God" does not appear in any English translations of the Bible, the Greek word *ecclesia*, usually translated *church* can alternately be translated as *assembly*.

³⁰*Minutes of the General Council of the Assemblies of God in the United States of America, Canada and Foreign Lands Held at Hot Springs, Ark., April 2-12, 1914* (Findlay, OH: The Gospel Publishing House, 1914), 1.

³¹"Preamble and Resolution of Constitution," *Minutes of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, April 2-12, 1914*, 3.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵*Minutes of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, April 2-12, 1914, 1.*

³⁶“Preamble and Resolution of Constitution,” *Minutes of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, April 2-12, 1914, 3.*

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸*Minutes of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, April 2-12, 1914, 5.*

³⁹Clemmons, *Bishop C. H. Mason, 71.*

⁴⁰“The Glory Came Down,” *Word and Witness, May 20, 1914, 1.*

⁴¹W. F. Carothers, “Words of Commendation,” *Word and Witness, May 20, 1914, 1.*

⁴²“General Council Special,” *Word and Witness, May 20, 1914, 1.*

⁴³“Missionary Problem,” *Word and Witness, May 20, 1914, 1.*

⁴⁴In fact, John G. Lake, one of the delegates elected to the General Presbytery was a friend of William Seymour, and also pastored at one time the Pentecostal mission in Indianapolis, which had been known in its early days for its unique commitment to racial integration. See Alice Reynolds Flower, “When Pentecost Came to Indianapolis: A First-hand Report of the Revival Which Began in 1907,” *Heritage, December 1, 1985, 7.*

⁴⁵W. F. Carothers, “Grapes and Pomegranates,” *The Weekly Evangel, January 1, 1916, 9.*

⁴⁶W. F. Carothers, *Apostolic Faith* [Houston], March 1906, 12; qtd. in James R. Goff, Jr., *Fields White Unto Harvest: Charles F. Parham and the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism* (Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 1988), 108-9.

⁴⁷Qtd. in Goff, *Fields White Unto Harvest, 109.*

⁴⁸See Acts 17:24

⁴⁹W. F. Carothers, “Attitude of Pentecostal Whites to the Pentecostal Brethren in the South,” *Weekly Evangel, August 14, 1915, 2.*

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵² Cecil M. Robeck, "The PAST: Historical Roots of Racial Unity and Division in American Pentecostalism," *CyberJournal for Pentecostal-Charismatic Research* 14 (2005), <http://pctii.org/cyberj/cyberj14/robeck.html>.

⁵³ Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*, 246.

⁵⁴ Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 128.

⁵⁵ "Ministerial List of the General Council of the Assemblies of God," *Weekly Evangel*, September 1914; "Ministerial List of the General Council of the Assemblies of God," *Weekly Evangel*, January 8, 1916, 16.

⁵⁶ "Ministerial List," *Weekly Evangel*, January 8, 1916, 12.

⁵⁷ "Lee Hawkins, Colored. Reported Disaster," *The Christian Evangel*, May 17, 1919, 13.

⁵⁸ Joseph K. Blakeney, "An Encouraging Word from Durban, South Africa," *Weekly Evangel*, February 2, 1918, 5.

⁵⁹ "Bro. and Sister Page," *Weekly Evangel*, April 6, 1918, 11.

⁶⁰ "In the Regions Beyond," *Weekly Evangel*, March 30, 1918, 9.

⁶¹ Nellie Wright, "Coffeyville, Kansas," *Weekly Evangel*, October 6, 1917, 14.

⁶² Douglas Jacobsen, *Thinking in the Spirit: Theologies of the Early Pentecostal Movement*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003), 262.

⁶³ Douglas Jacobsen, *Thinking in the Spirit: Theologies of the Early Pentecostal Movement*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003), 262.

⁶⁴ Howard Nelson Kenyon, "An Analysis of Racial Separation Within the Early Pentecostal Movement" (M.A. thesis, Baylor University, 1978), 139.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion

While the year 1914, in many ways, may have brought an end to Pentecostalism's brief period of interracial unity, the impact made by the movement during the preceding 8 years was nonetheless extremely significant, both for its tremendous growth as a religious movement and for the remarkable signs of fraternal unity between Pentecostals of all races. In addition, the few years closing out the first decade of Pentecostalism were also significant in viewing how Pentecostalism re-formed from a primarily integrated to a mostly segregated movement. This thesis has surveyed the race relations during the first decade of the Pentecostal movement (from 1906 to 1916) and analyzed the rhetoric surrounding both the initial racial integration of the movement and the subsequent re-segregation that occurred as formal associations and denominations began to form. At least for a time, and particularly at the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles, "the 'color line'" truly was "washed away in the Blood."¹ Though the doctrine of speaking in tongues and the phenomenon's designation as the unequivocal sign of Holy Spirit baptism was first introduced by Charles Parham and his Bible school students in 1901, Pentecostalism as a movement found its roots in the Azusa Street revival of 1906-1909. It was here also that William Seymour was able to incorporate his vision for racial unity and divine love as an integral characteristic of the Spirit-baptized (Pentecostal) Church. For this reason, it is with the Azusa Street revival of 1906-1908 that the rhetorical analysis of race relations in early Pentecostalism began. Now, in the final chapter of this thesis, I will briefly review the development of race relations within the movement as described in the

preceding chapters, revisiting especially some of the conclusions made in answer to the original four research questions presented at the beginning of the thesis paper. In essence, this review will recount the ways in which racial integration and/or segregation were shaped and reflected rhetorically. Then, I will conclude this thesis with a general analysis of the first ten years of Pentecostal race relations, especially highlighting this era's contemporary importance as a unique example of spiritually-motivated interracial unity.

Emerging primarily from within the Holiness movement, Pentecostalism already had at least some foundation of interracial unity. While racial integration within the Holiness movement was by no means universal, a few Holiness leaders like Martin Wells Knapp and John Alexander Dowie had set a precedent both of racially integrating their services and appointing both white and black ministers to leadership positions. In particular, William Seymour, leader of the Azusa Street Revival, drew from this legacy when he continued the theme of unity to enact racial integration within the new Pentecostal movement. As described both by attendees' reports of the revival and by local newspaper reports, the unity experienced at the Azusa Street meetings was certainly unique, but also controversial. As Vinson Synan notes, the racial integration of early Pentecostalism was "a glaring exception to the national norm."² Fostering this interracial unity was both Seymour's deliberate attempt to include people of all races in the leadership of the movement, as well as a generalized rhetoric of unity. Moreover, his explicit affiliation with Parham, at least early on during the revival, helped outsiders to conceive the revival as more than just a black prayer meeting. Truly, Seymour used the message of Galatians 3:28—that "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female," and that all are "one in Christ Jesus"—to minimize the difference between black

and white. Consequently, following the logic of Seymour's rhetoric, any distinction made between races would be outside of the bounds of thinking with "the mind of Christ."³

Thus, Seymour demonstrated the importance of integration both in a fraternal way, as well as structurally, by maintaining a mixed credentialing and advisory board, though he rarely addressed the race problem explicitly.

Despite the fact that many Pentecostals did embrace the interracial unity found at the Azusa Street revival, challenges soon arose from those who did not agree that all were "one in Christ Jesus," or at least not that Christian unity necessarily called for racial integration. While the Azusa Revival itself was able to withstand direct attacks, such as that of Charles Parham, against the countercultural racial unity displayed at the revival meetings, the movement slowly began to re-segregate as the movement grew and split (predominately along racial lines) into various associations, fellowships, and denominations within the larger movement.⁴ While Seymour's generalized rhetoric of unity was able to draw many people of all races into the Pentecostal movement, the transcendent rhetoric Seymour preferred failed to enact a sustained interracial union among Pentecostals.

I argue that one of the reasons for this is that the Pentecostal rhetoric of unity voiced by Seymour failed to specifically address the race problem in the United States. Rather than explicitly deal with the problem of segregation and its consequences for the Church in America, Seymour's vision for racial integration was more of an implicit aspect of the greater theme of Spirit-inspired love and unity. Seymour never denounced racial segregation directly. Because of this, other doctrines of Pentecostalism quickly eclipsed the message of racial unity in bringing Pentecostals together. For example, William

Durham's introduction of the "Finished Work" doctrine, while by no means racist or even pro-segregation, was one of the first big theological divisions within the movement, and it happened to occur along racial lines. Not only did the "Finished Work" doctrine surface in 1911 as one of the theological fault lines over which Pentecostals would divide, it also brought the final blow to the already-declining influence of the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission in Los Angeles. Thus, instead of all Pentecostals uniting together, despite theological or racial differences, the movement quickly began to dissolve into various factions and to re-segregate, mostly along racial lines.

While Seymour's legacy of racial unity continued for a time on the national level, even this was short-lived. Though Pentecostal leaders like C. H. Mason, Glenn Cook, and A. J. Tomlinson helped to perpetuate racial integration by holding integrated meetings, working across racial lines organizationally, and sometimes even preaching directly against racism and segregation, as a whole the theme of racial unity was losing its position as a central aspect of the Pentecostal experience. In many ways, this began even before the Azusa Revival itself. While the Azusa Street revival is viewed by many historians as the beginning of the Pentecostal movement, the Pentecostal doctrine of speaking in tongues and its consideration as the unequivocal sign of Baptism in the Holy Spirit precedes the Azusa Street revival by five years. This doctrine of course began with Charles Parham, the once "Father" and "Projector of the Pentecostal Movement," who was also the first Pentecostal to denounce what was happening at the Azusa Street revival.⁵ Though Parham himself was essentially cut off from the movement in 1907, his organization continued to grow and began to interact with other Pentecostals who had been brought into the movement as a direct or indirect effect of the Azusa Street revival.

Despite working with C. H. Mason and receiving their ministerial credentials through his Church of God in Christ denomination, for these Pentecostals, Seymour's vision for racial unity was not a distinctive feature of their Pentecostal experience. For them, Pentecostalism and the experience of Holy Spirit baptism was primarily about the gift of tongues, not a breakdown of racial barriers.

Consequently, in 1914, despite utilizing a rhetoric of unity and ecumenism, a significant number of white ministers gave up their Church of God in Christ credentials to form the (predominately white) Assemblies of God. This move, and subsequent decisions within the Assemblies of God fellowship over the next few years, effectively signaled the end of Pentecostalism's short epoch as a countercultural exception to the racial segregation of the United States in the early 20th century. Even though Assemblies of God leaders claimed to promote unity and a love for men of whatever race, the fellowship nonetheless acquiesced to the segregationist norms of the surrounding culture. Though the mostly white leaders of the Assemblies of God may have loved people of all races, it was nonetheless done from a distance. By 1916, only ten years after the outbreak of the vastly influential Azusa Street revival, Pentecostalism had devolved from a racially integrated, countercultural spiritual movement to a group of racially segregated associations that had lost its prophetic voice to speak to the contemporary problem of race in America.

Interestingly, while the initial racial integration of the early Pentecostal movement was encouraged by a general rhetoric of unity, a similar generalized unity rhetoric was used several years later to obscure the reality of racial segregation within the growing movement. Because of its general, transcendent nature—and especially its failure to

specifically address race issues—the general rhetoric of unity could be used to promote either the segregation or integration of black and white Pentecostals. Thus, a unity rhetoric could be implemented and shaped to conform to accomplish a variety of ends.

Analysis

Despite its short-lived nature, the racial integration experienced during the first few years of the Pentecostal movement was nonetheless significant. Of course, most significant, and especially for its time, was the unique nature of the racial integration that occurred during the Azusa Street revival. While multiracial church attendance was not entirely unique in America—especially during the pre-Civil War era—the seating was usually segregated, often with African Americans relegated to the balcony or a set of rows within the congregation. Moreover, the leadership of the churches was almost always white, and rarely could an African American minister to a Caucasian person. Henry H. Mitchell, in a 1968 article on church integration highlights the importance of this, when he talks about the need for the white Christian “to *receive*, just as the Negro has done when he has joined the whites.”⁶ Thus, this is one of the primary factors that set Azusa Street apart. Everyone was equally qualified to minister, no matter the skin color.

Another significant aspect of the initial racial integration of Pentecostalism due to the Azusa Street Revival is in its inherent connection to spirituality. It is interesting to note that the racial unity envisioned by one of the foremost proponents of civil rights, Martin Luther King, Jr. was foreshadowed fifty years earlier by a religious revival that had yet to be recognized by the broader American culture. While it has already been pointed out that this generalized rhetoric of unity failed to maintain a sustained level of racial integration as the message of Azusa Street moved beyond a localized revival to a national

movement, its potency at least on a localized level remains important. Moreover, despite the re-segregation that began to occur shortly after the beginning of the Pentecostal movement, the racially integrated roots of the Pentecostal movement found in the Azusa Street revival would impact the movement once again in later years. The most powerful example of this is found in the “Memphis Miracle” of 1994. This event was the first formal step of racial reconciliation in the Pentecostal movement after 80 years of virtual racial segregation. In this event, which was meant to encourage dialogue and reconciliation between Pentecostal leaders of different races, several steps were taken to counteract the segregation of the current state of Pentecostal denominations. For instance, the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America, an association formed in 1948, which comprised the majority of white Pentecostal denominations, was disbanded in order to form a new, racially-integrated Pentecostal association. Also, in what was a symbolically powerful act, the head of the Assemblies of God fellowship spontaneously washed the feet of the head bishop of the Church of God in Christ. The organizers of this event drew on the legacy of racial integration at Azusa Street as an inspiration for a return to racial unity in Pentecostalism. Thus, even though the actual racial integration at Azusa Street may have been interrupted by the theological division and pressure from the outside culture, its legacy is significant in that it is again being recognized by Pentecostals in America.⁷ Of course, this legacy is important beyond just the Pentecostal movement. As James Choung writes in his essay on William Seymour, “Disturbingly, though influential white Christian leaders have been recognized by the American Evangelical community, Seymour, an African-American, has been largely overlooked, even though his emphasis on racial

reconciliation, holy living and the power of the Holy Spirit are lessons desperately needed to be learned in our modern day.”⁸

Of course, if the legacy of the initial integration of the early Pentecostal movement is ever to reach its full potential in breaking down barriers of segregation today, its downfalls must also be acknowledged. For this reason, an account of the way in which the subsequent segregation of the movement was encouraged and explained rhetorically is equally (or perhaps even more) important. In particular, an accurate analysis of race relations in the early Pentecostal movement is significant in order to avoid the oversimplified, and problematic, view that lack of overt racism is synonymous with true racial unity. For example, while it Charles Parham’s response to the Azusa Street revival was the most direct attack on racial unity in the movement, it was the exodus of leaders like Lum, Crawford, and Durham that had the most devastating impact on the Los Angeles mission.

In the same way, the formation of the Assemblies of God in 1914, though there was by no means any overt condemnation of racial unity, nonetheless marked the *de facto* segregation of the Pentecostal movement on a national level. Additionally, even Carothers’ explanation of the southern Assemblies of God stance on the correctness of segregation still maintained a rhetoric of love for all races. Thus, we see that for true racial unity to be sustained, it must involve a deliberate commitment to bringing people of different races together, not simply loving one another from a distance.

Notes

¹Frank Bartleman, *Another Wave Rolls In! (formerly) What Really Happened at "Azusa Street?"*, edited by John Walker, (Monroeville, PA: Whitaker Books, 1962), 55.

²Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 167.

³1 Corinthians 2:16

⁴As Vinson Synan, among others, notes, "Only after the various movements began to coalesce into formal denominations did divisions occur along racial lines." *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 167.

⁵See Craig Borlase, *William Seymour: A Biography* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2006), 178.

⁶Henry H. Mitchell, "Toward the New Integration," *The Christian Century*, June 12, 1968, 781.

⁷See B. E. Underwood, "The Memphis Miracle." *Legacy* (July 1997), <http://www.pcti.org/arc/underwoo.html>.

⁸James Choung, "Let the Walls Come Down: William Seymour," InterVarsity Ministry Exchange, <http://www.intervarsity.org/mx/item/4332> (Accessed April 21, 2007), 1.

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