



The Azusa Street Hall of Shame

By Bob DeWaay

In 1973 as a student at North Central Bible College of the Assemblies of God, I remember sitting in chapel when the president of our college spoke about the dangers of the Latter Rain movement. He told us, “We are a non-prophet organization.” In the late 1940’s the Assemblies of God had lost many congregations to the heretical Latter Rain movement and many of my Bible College teachers could still remember those days. They warned us to steer clear of any who claimed to be apostles and prophets. We were told to avoid anyone who claimed “new revelations” from God and to stick to the Bible alone as authoritative revelation.

My teachers were godly men like John Phillips, Wesley Smith, and William Snow whose teachings were grounded in Scripture. Because I had some hyper-pious tendencies as a new Christian, they warned me and encouraged me to learn the Greek, learn hermeneutics, and to not go outside of the clear teachings of the Bible. It was Assemblies of God Pentecostals who brought my wife’s family to the Lord while I was engaged to her and ultimately brought me to the Lord. From the Bible College teachers to the pastors I had early in my walk with the Lord, all of them warned against the type of teachings routinely promoted today, teachings that are attacks on the gospel. In fact, one day a guest speaker in chapel espoused the prosperity gospel. In class immediately after chapel, our teacher warned us that this was false teaching; it shamed many godly Christians he had known over the years who gave much of their money to churches and missionaries who consequently lived their entire lives quite poor. How things have changed.

This April there will be a celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Azusa Street revival. The celebration advertisement promises “The Spiritual Experience of a Lifetime.” On page 8 of the glossy promotional brochure is Thomas E. Trask, General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God who is also a program participant. Trask calls the event, “a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the Pentecostal/Charismatic church to come together to celebrate what began in the Book of Acts.”

The docket of speakers for the event reads like a Who’s Who of Heretics: T. D. Jakes, Fredrick Price, Kenneth Copeland, Benny Hinn, Jerry Savelle, Creflo Dollar,

David Yonggi Cho, and Bill Hamon to name a few. What these speakers all have in common is that their teachings are incompatible with the doctrines taught earlier in the Assemblies of God and at North Central Bible College from 1971 to 1974.

Bill Hamon (bishophamon.org claims he is not only a bishop but a “prophet-apostle”) promotes latter day apostles with new revelations, the very teaching I was warned against when I attended Bible College. And T. D. Jakes promotes the “oneness” anti-trinity heresy I was warned against back then.

The question is: who represents Pentecostalism today? What happened to the generation of Pentecostals that rejected the prosperity message, who rejected the apostles and prophets of the Latter Rain movement, who rejected “new prophetic revelations,” and who rejected the oneness message? That generation was firmly grounded in the authority of Scripture and the clear proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. They have mostly passed from the scene of history. Today, everything they warned about is being played out at the Azusa Street Centennial, portrayed as the glorious legacy of Pentecostalism.

We cannot pretend that these teachings are compatible. If what is being preached at this modern day Azusa Street is true, then the teachers at North Central Bible College and most of the pastors in the Assemblies of God (as witnessed by position papers from the 50’s through early 70’s) were in error in the early 70’s to warn us about these teachings. If what is being taught at the Azusa conference is false, then current Pentecostal leadership owes an apology to its predecessors and needs to repent of this compromise.

Orrel Steinkamp is a retired Assemblies of God minister. He publishes “The Plumline” (74425 Co. Rd. 21 Renville, MN 56284) in which he warns about the errors that have come into the movement. He has archives of research material that show how aberrational and heretical doctrine has infiltrated the Pentecostal movement. Orrel represents the type of leadership that I sat under in Bible College. Sadly, there are so few men like him left on the scene of history that one wonders if the entire Pentecostal movement will become rallying place for heretics of every shape and size. If the Azusa Street Centennial is indicative of the movement in general, this has already happened.

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