

Pentecostals Prepare For Azusa Centennial

Some hope the event will stir a spiritual passion that sparks another great move of God

As the 100th anniversary of the Azusa Street Revival approaches, charismatic and Pentecostal leaders are gearing up for a celebration that they believe could draw more than 100,000 Christians from around the globe.

Roughly 150 ministers from the various streams in the Pentecostal-charismatic movement are working together to organize the Azusa Street Centennial celebration (). The event is to be held at the Los Angeles Convention Center April 25-29.

The centennial will feature several services running concurrently each night, including women's events at Angeles Temple led by Women's Aglow President Jane Hansen, faith services at Fred Price's Faith Dome led by Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, and rallies honoring Azusa Street pastor William J. Seymour at Bishop Charles Blake's West Angeles Cathedral. A healing crusade will be held April 25.

Intercessors from across the nation have been praying that the celebration would spark a move of God similar to the one that birthed modern Pentecostalism.

Back in April 1906, itinerant black preacher William J. Seymour stood on the porch of the house on 214 Bonnie Brae Street in Los Angeles and preached to ever-increasing crowds gathered in the street below. He and others had recently been baptized in the Holy Spirit inside the house and had spoken in tongues.

Reports say the presence of the Holy Spirit was so strong people walking by fell to the ground or went to their knees in prayer. After the large crowds caused the house's foundation to collapse, the group moved to a former stable at 314 Azusa Street, about a mile away. Those meetings birthed a movement that today is believed to have some 600 million adherents.

Event coordinator Robert Fisher, who died Sept. 28 after battling leukemia, hoped the centennial would result in another move of the Holy Spirit. "We do believe it will be a catalyst for a fresh move of God the same way the Azusa Street Revival was originally," Fisher told Charisma in July.

"For the first time all the diverse streams of the movement that flowed from Azusa Street will be flowing back into it," added Fisher, who was executive director for the Center for Spiritual Renewal in Cleveland Tenn. "I have a very strong spiritual sense that this is like nothing I have helped with before."

Organizers are praying that the hallmarks of the Azusa Street Revival, which broke down barriers of racism, economic status and gender, would be evident in April. Unity in diversity and spiritual manifestations are two important themes.

"It's sad to see the church fragmented, and I believe the centennial has every possibility of bringing us all back together," said Cornell "Corkie" Haan, the centennial's chief communications officer. "We are believing for another 600 million Pentecostals in this century. The world is ready."

Foursquare President Jack Hayford said he is excited about the

centennial, but added that it is difficult to say that it will be the “springboard” for the next great revival. “My personal, foremost hope is that those of us from the long-term Pentecostal tradition would come together with enthusiasm, not just to revisit history for its own sake, but to celebrate spiritual passion. That is what I think God honors.”

Ed Donnally in Los Angeles