

Azusa Street 'Walk of Remembrance' Honors William Seymour

The date Feb. 22, 1906, is noted in history as the arrival date of pastor William J. Seymour into downtown Los Angeles. The "Walk of Remembrance" being hosted next week will showcase two historic sites in Los Angeles and will be hosted by the Azusa Street Mission and Historical Society, which was founded by Fred and Wilma Berry.

The walk will begin at 244 South San Pedro Street at noon on Saturday, Feb. 22, in the Little Tokyo community in downtown Los Angeles. Various community leaders and churches will participate in remembering two great African-Americans in Los Angeles, Biddy Mason and William Seymour.

The first site on the two-block walk is the Biddy Mason Memorial Wall at 331 Spring Street, which was the location of the home of an African-American midwife and landowner. She held a significant amount of acreage during the 1800s that today comprises downtown Los Angeles, and she founded the First . Church.

The group will then proceed to Azusa Street in Little Tokyo, home of the Azusa Street Mission founded by Seymour, an African-American pastor who held meetings at a small storefront church on Santa Fe Street when he arrived in Los Angeles in 1906. This small church plant had resulted from some tent meetings at First and Bonnie Brae Streets, held by W.F. Manley's group, the Household of God.

The members came from various holiness backgrounds, particularly the Nazarene Church, and were seeking a holiness preacher to be their pastor. Neely Terry, one of these members, recommended elder William J. Seymour. She had first

met this black, one-eyed preacher on a recent visit to relatives in Houston, Texas, where Seymour was standing in for the regular pastor, Mrs. Lucy Farrow.

Noted speaker and historian Mel Robeck, of Fuller Theological Seminary, will lead and conduct the walking tour of these two historic locations. Many leaders from the churches in Los Angeles will be on hand to proclaim unity in our diversity.

In addition, a special announcement will be made about the planned memorial wall dedicated to the birth of a movement that now numbers over a half billion members of Pentecostal churches worldwide.