Why the decline in the pentecostal movement? - posted by jerryaustin1 (), on: 2010/5/15 3:40

I say pentecostal movement, I do not mean the charismatic word of faith. I mean the assembly of God, church of God, and the holiness movement primarily. Those who believed strongly in the baptism of the Holy Ghost being subsequent to salvation. With the evidence being speaking in tongues AS THE SPIRIT GIVES THE UTTERANCE.

I imagine there are multiple reasons for their decline. Is the neglect of biblical teaching of the baptism a vital reason? Or perhaps a perverse teaching? Maybe an ignorance of it's necessity? I am a young man. I have not been in the movement as long as many. I have not seen it's former glory days when there was great power as there was holiness. I have not seen it's great transition from the Glory of God to the arm of the flesh. I have not seen the acts that led to it's decline.

If I get some opinions and insights, that would be great.

Re: Why the decline in the pentecostal movement? - posted by Lysa (), on: 2010/5/15 7:11

I visited a friend's church about a month ago, she told me they were having revival and yes came out of my mouth before I knew it! I gave up going to minister at the jail to go to this Assembly of God revival meeting. In my spirit, I was excited and was prepared to stay into the wee hours of the evening but we were out by 8:30.

Now granted, it's been a while since I've been to any "Pentecostal" church so my feedback may be tainted through absence! But sitting there listening to this visiting evangelist, except for the sign on the church, I thought I was in a Baptist church because his whole message was about the, "the altar call." And he kept looking at his watch (preachers should not be allowed to wear watches), it was very distracting. I cannot say I was bored to tears because he told about visiting the Holy Land and I was very interested in that.

This is the way basic church goes: welcome, sing 3 maybe 4 songs, take up offering, preach 30 minutes (that night 45), ask if anyone wants to be saved, goodbye prayer. Seriously, how can any church (house or regular) be "different" when they all are following that schedule?

In this churches defense, that night they prayed with those who wanted to be saved, who wanted the Holy Ghost, who wanted to be healed and in that order. People went forward, so it couldn't have been that bad! But I left feeling something was missing.

Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, where will we go, for thou hast the words of eternal life." Hearing from the throne of God, to me, are those words of eternal life and THAT is sadly, what the "Pentecostal" churches are missing - words of eternal life straight from the throne of God.

Re: Why the decline in the pentecostal movement? - posted by Goldminer (), on: 2010/5/15 9:04

I know a pentecostal holiness minister that is retired. He is constantly grieving because worldliness has crept into the church. They still go to services, but are more concerned with looking good, and going to lunch, than they are about letting their hair down and crying out to God. The prayer meetings are poorly attended and there is no weeping between the porch and the altar. When they are out in public they are not kind to waiters and very demanding, showing no real signs of the love of Christ shed abroad in their hearts. This first generation gentleman weeps and grieves over the hardness of their hearts.

There are no second generation christians. Going because your momma did is not enough. You must be born again. It is a very rare thing to see a second generation with the same zeal as the first, sad to say. These are things for fervent intercession. We have the example of Israel, the father destroyed the high places and idols and their sons set them back up again. I know there were a few that followed their fathers, and that gives us hope, unfortunately, very few. Prayer, fasting and dying to self will impact the world around us. It is our calling.
Re: - posted by Nellie, on: 2010/5/15 9:36

The decline in the Pentecostal movement is because they made being filled with the Holy Ghost an option. They don't teach being filled with the Holy Ghost anymore, according to Acts where the 120 were filled, and spoke with tongues. They want to be accepted by the World, instead of being persecuted. May God help His Church to return to the full Gospel of Jesus Christ.

God Bless
Nellie

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2010/5/15 10:02

I think there are many reasons for this. Much can be traced to what Paris Reidhead called, "The Tragedy of Third Generation Religion." There is a message here on SI along those lines and in my view is as important as Ten Shekels. Understand that the solution is for men and women to hear from God and respond. Bottom line. Jesus had a message for the churches of Asia and He has a message for His churches today. There are no broad band answers.

Some casual observations? Where to begin? Difficult questions.

I think one of the problems is that Pentecostal churches fell victim to the quick-fix, high-speed, evangelistic processing methods. The idea of tarrying at the altar until a person had come into a real relationship with God was by and large forsaken. There was a deemphasis on the New Birth. I have written about this subject here on SI in a tractate called, "The Betrayal of the Ages." You can do a net search also it may turn up.

I think another problem is the desire for acceptance among other mainstream evangelical groups. There was a systematic effort among the 60's generation Pentecostal 2nd and 3rd generation kids to distance themselves from their parents and grandparents. Vietnam was reality. Many young boys dying. Rebellion was rife. The 50's had set a rebellious tone against parents and authority. It carried into the 60's in the music and culture. The concept of 'youth' was on the rise since 1940 or so. They were a new demographic. This is important, I think.

Young people did not want Vietnam and many did not want their parents religion either. Those that were able often opted for college of some sort. Sometimes Bible College and Seminary. Many Pentecostals went into Seminary and come out Baptists and Presbyterians. There was a major surge of preachers in the 60's that fell totally off soon afterwards. When the Cold War ended the problem seem to grow even worse. Few hearing the call of God today. Something about war gets a person listening to God, I think. Just my 2 cent opinion. Hard to prove. I know it happened at times.

Why? I think because many kids raised in church do not come into a genuine relationship with God through the Born Again experience. They sat around and learned the lingo and became cynical. Seen it in my day as a youth pastor. Soon everyone but them is a hypocrite. Just keeping it real. Youth pick out the flaws in people and use them as excuses for their own rebellion. They distill the lives of godly family and friends so as to isolate their shortcoming into a caustic false representation of the person(s). This 'straw-man-of-God' image they use to buttress their own arguments against God and the church. Just what I see happening.

Others probably didn't want hell so they just skimmed Pentecost and holiness off the religion. Seems evident. No need to be judgmental. They will tell you themselves. All salvation is today is saved from the penalty of sin. So in this madness we find a low level version of Christianity at best and full-on rebellion at worst. In both cases there is no genuine New Birth. Their solution? Revert back to a fool proof theology that gets folk to Heaven on a head-nod or a signature.

My experience was not of one raised in Church. My great great grandparents were Methodist turned Pentecostal. They believed in holiness. Most old-school Classical Pentecostals do. We seemed to have reached a point where folk could receive the Holy Spirit (so-called) without genuine repentance. The emphasis was on POWER. Weird things happen in an environment where folk seek God independent of holiness. These weird things gave greater cause for non-Pentecostals to mock and ridicule. Old school pastors are mocked because they had no seminary degrees. Their followers are said to be ignorant mud-dobbers, etc. Heard it all. Will let God sort it out.

Who wants to be viewed as an ignorant bottom dweller? Part of our cross I think. Looks much more prestigious have lots of degrees behind the name. Seems to be the means by which many want to identify themselves and be respected. Sim ply put? Cast off Pentecost and put on the academic regalia. Not that they are necessarily opposed to one-another. "Oh
boy how we want to be esteemed and accepted everywhere! A few years ago God gave me a word, 'REJECTION',... Great!" (Leonard Ravenhill) We don't like rejection, do we. Remedy? Get in step with the means by which men honor one another. Consequence?

How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only? (John 5: 44)

Now I'm REAL big on education. But I'm very much against men and women identifying themselves based on this life's accomplishments no matter what form they take. The devil will give us all a claim-to-fame. What will you or I settle for? To be known? To be respected? To be honored? It is all what James called, "The Pride of Life." But again the question, "At what cost?" For some, PenteCOST. Why? They didn't want to look like a Hokey from Podunk. This is not always the case, but were just getting some issues on the table right now. Some Pentecostals acted arrogant perhaps as if they were more spiritual than anyone else. A real turn-off. Perhaps. But truly this is not the norm. Some would probably rather smite their face with excrement than be numbered among the Pentecostals, so there is no long line of folk trying to assume the title. Add to that the excesses of recent decades and the list dwindles to almost nothing.

What do I do? I close my ears and eyes to what I see lest I react in the flesh un-helping the situation. God has to speak to us. I'm not a strategist. I can't look to Toronto or Florida or TBN and trim my theology to insure avoidance. Why? Because if it's in the scriptures it is genuine. If it is part of the New Covenant it is as sure as the instructions in the Old Covenant. What happened when the people were out of step with the Old Covenant? God sent in men that were prepared to get the folk back in step with that covenant. Some started short of all God offered. It was their choice. It is my desire to walk in the fulness of all God wants for us in the New Covenant this side of eternity. If men and women will settle for nothing less I think we will continue to see a remnant that will settle for nothing less.

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Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2010/5/15 12:44

Robert wrote:

"I think because many kids raised in church do not come into a genuine relationship with God through the Born Again experience. They sat around and learned the lingo and became cynical. Seen it in my day as a youth pastor. Soon everyone but them is a hypocrite. Just keeping it real. Youth pick out the flaws in people and use them as excuses for their own rebellion. They distill the lives of godly family and friends so as to isolate their shortcoming into a caustic false representation of the person(s). This 'straw-man-of-God' image they use to buttress their own arguments against God and the church. Just what I see happening."

If I wouldn't know any better, I would think you would be talking about my own denomination which is not Pentecostal, but an outgrowth of the Anabaptist movement begun in 1525.

The devil's methods have not changed any in the ages since he deceived Eve in the Garden.

ginnyrose

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Re: Why the decline in the pentecostal movement?, on: 2010/5/16 12:05

There was a reality in the origins of the Pentecostal movement that was undeniable, with the primary characteristic being LIFE itself. There were many testimonies of the Presence and glory of God moving in the early days; which have taken on the birth mother as being AZUSA; L.A. California.

Out of this came the Assembly of God. Perhaps there are even some early photo's here of these meetings in Arkansas where the first Elders were ordained, who presided over the first generation following. A very good book to read on this subject is:
"Another Wave of Revival"; by Frank Bartleman....
and: ‘The New international dictionary of Pentecostal charismatic movements’ .. by Stanley Burgess.

In it you will see that immediately, even in the birth of the movement, there was error and contention, and political power struggles. Some also believed that the gift of speaking in tongues would enable them to preach in foreign lands, and instantly be anointed to speak; MANDARIN CHINESE instantly, without study or learning.

But the battle over power was in my estimation was the preeminent war that eventually chained the movement to the flesh. Even Brother William Seymour was seduced by this spirit.

......But, here is a testimony...."They shouted three days and three nights. It was Easter season. The people came from everywhere. By the next morning there was no way of getting near the house. As people came in they would fall under God’s power; and the whole city was stirred. They shouted until the foundation of the house gave way, but no one was hurt."

Here is a historical account of the foundations. In it you may see the cracks in the foundations.

In 1905, William J. Seymour, the one-eyed 34 year old son of former slaves, was a student of well-known Pentecostal preacher Charles Parham and an interim pastor for a small holiness church in Houston, Texas.

Neely Terry, an African American woman who attended a small holiness church pastored by Julia Hutchins in Los Angeles, made a trip to visit family in Houston late in 1905.

While in Houston, she visited Seymour’s church, where he preached the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues, and though he had not experienced this personally, Terry was impressed with his character and message. Once home in California, Terry suggested that Seymour be invited to speak at the local church.

Seymour received and accepted the invitation in February 1906, and he received financial help and a blessing from Parham for his planned one-month visit.

Seymour arrived in Los Angeles on February 22, 1906, and within two days was preaching at Julia Hutchins’ church at the corner of Ninth Street and Santa Fe Avenue.

During his first sermon, he preached that speaking in tongues was the first biblical evidence of the inevitable baptism in the Holy Spirit. On the following Sunday, March 4, he returned to the church and found that Hutchins had padlocked the door.

Elders of the church rejected Seymour’s teaching, primarily because he had not yet experienced the blessing about which he was preaching. Condemnation of his message also came from the Holiness Church Association of Southern California with which the church had affiliation.

However, not all members of Hutchins’ church rejected Seymour’s preaching. He was invited to stay in the home of congregation member Edward S. Lee, and he began to hold Bible studies and prayer meetings there.

North Bonnie Brae Street

Seymour and his wife, Jennie. Seymour and his small group of new followers soon relocated to the home of Richard and Ruth Asberry at 214 North Bonnie Brae Street. White families from local holiness churches began to attend as well. The group would get together regularly and pray to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

On April 9, 1906, after five weeks of Seymour’s preaching and prayer, and three days into an intended 10-day fast, Edward S. Lee spoke in tongues for the first time. At the next meeting, Seymour shared Lee’s testimony and preached a sermon on Acts 2:4 and soon six others began to speak in tongues as well, including Jennie Moore, who would later become Seymour’s wife. A few days later, on April 12, Seymour spoke in tongues for the first time after praying all night long.
The Asberry home on 214 North Bonnie Brae Street. News of the events at North Bonnie Brae St. quickly circulated among the African American, Latino and White residents of the city, and for several nights, various speakers would preach to the crowds of curious and interested onlookers from the front porch of the Asberry home.

Members of the audience included people from a broad spectrum of income levels and religious backgrounds. Hutchins eventually spoke in tongues as her whole congregation began to attend the meetings. Soon the crowds became very large and were full of people speaking in tongues, shouting, singing and moaning.

Finally, the front porch collapsed, forcing the group to begin looking for a new meeting place. A resident of the neighborhood described the happenings at 214 North Bonnie Brae with the following words:

They shouted three days and three nights. It was Easter season. The people came from everywhere. By the next morning there was no way of getting near the house. As people came in they would fall under God's power; and the whole city was stirred. They shouted until the foundation of the house gave way, but no one was hurt.

312 Azusa Street, Los Angeles, California, prior to its purchase by the revivalists. The group from Bonnie Brae Street eventually discovered an available building at 312 Azusa Street, which had originally been constructed as an African Methodist Episcopal Church in what was then a black ghetto part of town.

The rent was $8.00 per month. A newspaper referred to the downtown Los Angeles building as a "tumble down shack". Since the church had moved out, the building had served as a wholesale house, a warehouse, a lumberyard, stockyards, a tombstone shop, and had most recently been used as a stable with rooms for rent upstairs. It was a small, rectangular, flat-roofed building, approximately 60 feet (18 m) long and 40 feet (12 m) wide, totaling 4,800 square feet (450 m²), sided with weathered whitewashed clapboards. The only sign that it had once been a house of God was a single gothic-style window over the main entrance.

Discarded lumber and plaster littered the large, barn-like room on the ground floor. Nonetheless, it was secured and cleaned in preparation for services. They held their first meeting on April 14, 1906. Church services were held on the first floor where the benches were placed in a rectangular pattern. Some of the benches were simply planks put on top of empty nail kegs.

There was no elevated platform, as the ceiling was only eight feet high. Initially there was no pulpit. Frank Bartleman, an early participant in the revival, recalled that "Brother Seymour generally sat behind two empty shoe boxes, one on top of the other. He usually kept his head inside the top one during the meeting, in prayer. There was no pride there... In that old building, with its low rafters and bare floors..."

The second floor at the now-named Apostolic Faith Mission housed an office and rooms for several residents including Seymour and his new wife, Jennie. It also had a large prayer room to handle the overflow from the altar services below. The prayer room was furnished with chairs and benches made from California Redwood planks, laid end to end on backless chairs.

The Apostolic Faith Mission on Azusa Street, now considered to be the birthplace of Pentecostalism. By mid-May 1906, anywhere from 300 to 1,500 people would attempt to fit into the building. Since horses had very recently been the residents of the building, flies constantly bothered the attendees.

People from a diversity of backgrounds came together to worship: men, women, children, black, white, Hispanic, Asian, rich, poor, illiterate, and educated. People of all ages flocked to Los Angeles with both skepticism and a desire to participate.

The intermingling of races and the group's encouragement of women in leadership was remarkable, as 1906 was the height of the "Jim Crow" era of racial segregation and fourteen years prior to women receiving suffrage in the United States.

Services and worship
Worship at 312 Azusa Street was frequent and spontaneous with services going almost around the clock. Among those attracted to the revival were not only members of the Holiness Movement, but Baptists, Mennonites, Quakers, and Pres
byterians. An observer at one of the services wrote these words:

No instruments of music are used. None are needed. No choir- the angels have been heard by some in the spirit. No coll
ections are taken. No bills have been posted to advertise the meetings. No church organization is back of it. All who are i
n touch with God realize as soon as they enter the meetings that the Holy Ghost is the leader.
The Los Angeles Times was not so kind in its description:

Meetings are held in a tumble-down shack on Azusa Street, and the devotees of the weird doctrine practice the most fan
atical rites, preach the wildest theories and work themselves into a state of mad excitement in their peculiar zeal. Colore
d people and a sprinkling of whites compose the congregation, and night is made hideous in the neighborhood by the ho
wlings of the worshippers, who spend hours swaying forth and back in a nerve racking attitude of prayer and supplicatio
n. They claim to have the "gift of tongues" and be able to understand the babel.
Charles Parham was also sharp in his criticism:

Men and women, white and blacks, knelt together or fell across one another; a white woman, perhaps of wealth and cult
ure, could be seen thrown back in the arms of a big 'edit' and held tightly thus as she shivered and shook in freak imitati
on of Pentecost. Horrible, awful shame!
The first edition of the Apostolic Faith publication claimed a common reaction to the revival from visitors:

Proud, well-dressed preachers came to 'investigate'. Soon their high looks were replaced with wonder, then conviction c
omes, and very often you will find them in a short time wallowing on the dirty floor, asking God to forgive them and make
them as little children.

Among first-hand accounts were reports of the blind having their sight restored, diseases cured instantly, and immigr
ants speaking in German, Yiddish, and Spanish all being spoken to in their native language by uneducated black memb
ers, who translated the languages into English by "supernatural ability".

Singing was sporadic and in a cappella or occasionally in tongues. There were periods of extended silence. Attender
s were occasionally slain in the Spirit. Visitors gave their testimony, and members read aloud testimonies that were sent
to the mission by mail. There was prayer for the gift of tongues. There was prayer in tongues for the sick, for missionarie
s, and whatever requests were given by attenders or mailed in.

There was spontaneous preaching and altar calls for salvation, sanctification and baptism of the Holy Spirit. Lawrence
Catley, whose family attended the revival, said that in most services preaching consisted of Seymour opening a Bible an
d worshippers coming forward to preach or testify as they were led by the Holy Spirit.

Many people would continually shout throughout the meetings. The members of the mission never took an offering,
but there was a receptacle near the door for anyone that wanted to support the revival. The core membership of the Azu
sa Street Mission was never much more than 50-60 individuals with hundreds and thousands of people visiting or stayin
g temporarily over the years.

Beliefs

Charles Parham, Seymour's teacher, who is now considered to be one of the founders of PentecostalismSeymour and t
he other revivalists at the Apostolic Faith Mission on Azusa Street held to five core beliefs:

1. Salvation by Faith.
2. Sanctification (or Holiness) of the believer.
3. Tongues as evidence of Baptism with the Holy Spirit.
4. Faith healing as part of God's redemption.
5. The "very soon" return of Christ.

...Charles Parham
Main article: Charles Parham

By October 1906, Charles Parham was invited to speak for a series of meetings at Azusa Street
Scriptures and Doctrine :: Why the decline in the pentecostal moovemment?

will continue...timed out

Re: Why the decline in the pentecostal moovement?, on: 2010/5/16 17:30
There is a lot of people that are leaving the AoG and other Pentecostal circles and there is a decline of spiritual leadership within the Assemblies. I left for different reasons other than the obvious.

I am like you, I came into this when the power of God was diminishing. I sat under a Pastor who has since been deceased. There was a lot of the tongues and interpretation and different type of healing that I never experienced before in those days (early 90's). Certain meetings we could feel that God was going to do something and we'd all pray together, we were all believers there so praying in tongues was something we often did. We never had this barking stuff or laughing, it was as genuine as I know. My Pastor had revivals before in the 60's and 70's, so he knew what was of God and what wasn't. I miss him and those days. We were a family, knitted together. God sent me there to submit myself under authority and to hear some good solid teaching on Justification, Sanctification, and a lot other wonderful doctrinal truths.

If a family doesn't have unity, it's divided. At one time, we used to be our brothers keeper. There was never this idea that we are an Island unto ourselves. Going to Church wasn't just about Sunday, we understood that we are the Church and we are not our own, we belong together and should look out for one another.

I believe that this decline is from God. Though declining in the Churches, but not declining as believers. They may at first think that because they don't go to a Church building that they are backslidden, and they may go a certain way for a time in that thinking and they will realize that God has not given up on them, and come to the conclusion that whether I live or die, I am the Lord's. Whether I go to Church or not, I am still the Lord's. Of course it's much better to be in a congregation, however, I still belong to the Lord.

Last year at a local AoG they had guest speaker by the name of David Ravenhill son of the great Leonard Ravenhill. His message was dynamic, his response was dead. Several years before, that Church was praying for a revival. Revival came to which I was very much apart. It was not a laughing movement, there was no barking, there was repentance, renewal, reconciliation, the gifts of Spirit beginning to operate. Until that foolish unwise Pastor stood up in the 5th week of that Revival and said these stupid words, "We are going to stop the Revival".

Several Pastors in the city came to him with concerns that the congregations were dwindling and going to his church. He respected them more than the Spirit of God.

Now someone might say, "if it was true Revival, you can't stop it." You might be right, but maybe this wasn't a revival, maybe it was a renewal, a time of repentance, I time for healing, a time to forgive. Today that Church is as dead as the word that they sit on.

Re: - posted by jimp, on: 2010/5/16 18:07
hi, thank you all for true,warm and well written input,jimp