



A Decade of Pentecost
Resource from the
Acts in Africa Initiative



The Women *of* Azusa Street

Four Spirit-Anointed Leaders
of the Azusa Street Revival

Denzil R. Miller

The Women
of
Azusa Street

**Four Spirit-Anointed Leaders
of the Azusa Street Revival**

© Denzil R. Miller

The Women of Azusa Street: Four Spirit-Anointed Leaders of the Azusa Street Revival © 2015 Denzil R. Miller. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise—without prior written permission of the copyright owner, except brief quotations used in connection with reviews in magazines or newspapers.

This booklet is an adaptation of Chapter 6 of the book *From Azusa to Africa to the Nations: Second Edition*, published in 2015 by AIA Publications, Springfield, MO, USA

All scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION. Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984, International Bible Society. All rights reserved.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Miller, Denzil R., 1946-

The Women of Azusa Street: Four Spirit-Anointed Leaders of the Azusa Street Revival
Denzil R. Miller

1. History—Church 2. History—Pentecostal. 3. Missions

Printed in the United States of America
AIA Publications
580-D Central Street
Springfield, MO 65802

Website: www.ActsinAfrica.org
E-mail: actsinafrica@agmd.org

CONTENTS

Introduction	5
Chapter 1: Julia Hutchins	9
Chapter 2: Lucy Farrow	11
Chapter 3: Jennie Seymour	15
Chapter 4: Rachel Sizelove	17
Endnotes	21
Other Booklets Available from AIA Publications	23
Other Decade of Pentecost Books	24
More Books by Denzil R. Miller	25

4 - CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

One cannot adequately tell the story of Azusa Street without talking about the women who so valuably contributed to the work. In fact, without these women there would have been no Azusa Street revival, at least not in the way it happened.

Five years before the Los Angeles outpouring, Pentecostal historians trace the beginning of the modern Pentecostal Movement back to Topeka, Kansas, where on January 1, 1901, a humble holiness woman named Agnes Ozman was the first to

be filled with the Spirit and began speaking in tongues as the Spirit gave utterance. This occurred at Charles Parham's Bethel Bible School. Just as in the book of Acts, the Spirit opened the heart of a woman to be the first person to receive the gospel in Europe (Acts 16:14), in Topeka the Spirit opened the heart of a woman to be the first to receive the Spirit in the modern Pentecostal revival.



► Agnes Ozman was the first to receive the Spirit in the Topeka Revival.

6 - INTRODUCTION

At Azusa Street many women of various ethnic backgrounds were filled with the Spirit and empowered to teach, preach, and plant churches. They also went as Pentecostal emissaries to cities throughout the U.S.A. and to various parts of the world, including Africa. Along with the men, these anointed women gave spiritual and administrative oversight to the work. In fact, six of the twelve administrative elders at Azusa Street were women. As such they were entrusted with the duty of ordaining evangelists, planting churches, and sending out missionaries from the mission to spread the good news that “Pentecost has come.”¹ Estrelida Alexander has noted,

At a time when the larger society was still wrestling with the issue of a woman’s rightful place, these women found a place for themselves at Azusa Street. While most denominations had not begun to ordain women or allow them in the pulpit, these women claimed for themselves ordination by God and made a pulpit wherever they found themselves at the Azusa Street Mission and on the surrounding streets and campgrounds.²

These Pentecostal women believed that the Spirit Himself had qualified them and dispatched them to preach the gospel. They based this belief on Jesus’ promise of Acts 1:8 and on Joel’s promise in 2:28-29 which Peter quoted on the Day of Pentecost. They often cited Paul’s admonition that in Christ “there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:8). They interpreted Paul’s prohibitions concerning women teaching and preaching in 1 Corinthians 14:35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-14 as dealing with local situations. However, Joel’s promise that “your sons *and your daughters* shall

prophesy” they saw as a universal principle to be believed and acted upon during these last days of time when God was pouring out His Spirit on “all flesh.” This chapter will feature four of these remarkable women of Azusa Street

8 - INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1

JULIA HUTCHINS

Julia Hutchins holds a special place in the history of the Azusa Street revival, for she was the African-American pastor who invited William Seymour to come from Houston to Los Angeles to serve as pastor of the Santa Fe Street Holiness Mission. As you will remember from Chapter 1, it was she who locked Seymour out of the church because of his teaching on the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Thankfully, however, her story does not end there. She soon repented of this action and became a whole-hearted supporter of Seymour and his teaching that tongues is the “Bible evidence” of one’s being baptized in the Holy Spirit.

At the Azusa Street Mission Hutchins was herself baptized in the Holy Spirit and reaffirmed an earlier call to go to Africa as a missionary. Within five months of the beginning of the revival she and her husband, along with their young niece, Leila McKinney, left the mission to go as missionaries to Liberia on the West African coast. They were accompanied by G. W. and Daisy Batman, and Lucy Farrow.

Upon leaving Azusa Street Hutchins and her colleagues preached their way across the heartland of America to the East Coast. From there they proceeded by ship to Liverpool, England.

From Liverpool they sailed to Monrovia, Liberia. All along the way the missionaries faithfully spread the message of Pentecost. One report posted in *The Apostolic Faith* reads, “Sister Hutchins has been preaching the Gospel in the power of the Spirit.”³ We know little of Julia’s ministry in Liberia nor how long she stayed; however, we do know that she was one of the first Pentecostal missionaries to set foot on the African continent. Like many early Pentecostal women, her story simply fades into history. We can assume that when Julia returned to the U.S.A. she continued to minister in the Spirit until her death.

CHAPTER 2

LUCY FARROW

Of all the women of Azusa Street, Lucy Farrow is arguably the most notable. It was she who first introduced William Seymour to Charles Parham and to the Pentecostal experience. While we have already mentioned her in a previous chapter, more needs to be said about this extraordinary woman. She was reportedly the niece of the famed American abolitionist and friend of Abraham Lincoln, Fredrick Douglass. Although Lucy Farrow was born into slavery, by the time she met Seymour in 1905 she was serving as pastor of a small Afro-American Holiness church in Houston, Texas. As you will remember from Chapter 3, Farrow encouraged Seymour to attend Parham's Bible school where he was convinced concerning Parham's view of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Lucy Farrow has been called "the central prophet igniting the Holy Ghost fires in Southern California."⁴ She was known for her success in praying with people to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Even before the first outpouring on Bonnie Brae Street, Seymour sent for Farrow to come to Los Angeles and help him pray with seekers. Once in the city she was responsible for leading many at the Azusa Street Mission into the baptism in the Holy Spirit. According to Frank Ewart, "Within a few days of her

arrival, the revival broke out in earnest and one person after another began receiving the Pentecostal experience...”⁵ Some even say that it was she and not Seymour who prayed with Irish Owen Lee to receive the Holy Spirit thus igniting the Bonnie Brae Outpouring that led to Azusa Street.⁶

A mature minister of the gospel, Farrow became a key figure in the Azusa Street revival. She was admired for her wise spiritual leadership and often taught and preached alongside Seymour. She also served on the mission’s administrative board.

In addition to her work in Los Angeles, Farrow conducted preaching tours in Texas, Louisiana, North Carolina, Virginia, and New York. During one meeting in Texas in August of 1906 Farrow convinced Howard Goss concerning the truth of the doctrine and personally lead him into the experience of Spirit baptism. Goss was a key figure in the early Pentecostal movement and would become one of the founders of the Assemblies of God. He testified, “I went forward that she might place here hands upon me. When she did, the Spirit of God again struck me like a bolt of lightning; the power of God surged through my body, and I began speaking in tongues.”⁷ Along with the Julia Hutchins family and the G. W. Batmans, she was among the first Pentecostal missionaries to go to Africa.

During her seven months in Africa, Farrow lived and ministered in Johnsonville, Liberia, about 25 miles east of Monrovia.⁸ During one revival in Liberia in a report to *The Apostolic Faith* dated March 26, 1907, the team wrote,

We opened a ten days' meeting in a school house, and on the tenth night, the Lord came in mighty power. Two were baptized with the Holy Ghost and spoke in tongues. Ten here have received sanctification, and five are filled with the Holy Ghost and speaking in tongues. A brother and his household have been baptized with the Holy Ghost. God has called him to the ministry...⁹

When she returned to the U.S. Farrow lived with her son and his wife in Houston, Texas, for five years where she continued to lead believers into the baptism in the Holy Spirit. In 1911, only five years from the beginning of the Azusa Street revival, she died of intestinal tuberculosis at the age of sixty years. As with many other women of Azusa Street, her contribution and to the emerging Pentecostal movement was immense.

CHAPTER 3

JENNIE SEYMOUR

Jennie Evans Moore Seymour has been called “perhaps the most influential woman in the life and ministry of William Joseph Seymour.”¹⁰ She was one of seven people who received the Spirit and began to speak in tongues during the initial outpouring on Bonnie Brae Street. With her speaking in tongues, however, came another miracle. Robert Owens writes,



► Jennie Seymour became a leader in the Azusa Street Revival.

She began to play beautiful music on an old upright piano, and to sing in what people said was Hebrew. Up until this time she had never played the piano, and although she never took a lesson, she was able to play the instrument for the rest of her life.¹¹

Here is her own testimony as recorded in *The Apostolic Faith* newspaper:

On April 9, 1906, I was praising the Lord from the depths of my heart at home, and when the evening came and we attended the meeting the power of God fell and I was baptized

in the Holy Ghost and fire, with the evidence of speaking in tongues.... I sang under the power of the Spirit in many languages, the interpretation both words and music which I had never before heard, and in the home where the meeting was being held, the Spirit led me to the piano, where I played and sang under inspiration, although I had not learned to play.¹²

Two year later in May of 1908 she became the wife of William J. Seymour.

Jennie was one of the mission's "city evangelists" and was known for her powerful preaching and beautiful singing. She, along with others, made at least one trip to Chicago to William Durham's North Avenue Mission. She wrote from Chicago, "Truly, beloved, the mission at 943 W. North Avenue is a blessed place—many Spirit-filled men and women and children. They have more children than at Azusa and they are filled. Beloved, I would you could see them."¹³

During the years following the revival she became co-pastor of the Azusa Street Mission along with her husband, William. At his death she assumed leadership of the church. In 1907, remembering the day when she was first baptized in the Holy Spirit, Jennie wrote, "God is continuing to use me to His glory ever since that wonderful day, and I praise Him for the privilege of being a witness for Him under the Holy Ghost's power."¹⁴

CHAPTER 4

RACHEL SIZELOVE

Rachel Harper Sizelove holds a unique place in the Azusa Street revival and in the early history of the Pentecostal Movement. She is noted, not so much for what she did at Azusa Street, but for carrying the message of Pentecost from Azusa to Springfield, Missouri, the future home of the General Council of the Assemblies of God.¹⁵



► Rachel Sizelove carried the message of Azusa Street to Springfield, Missouri.

When Rachel and her husband, Josie, arrived in Los Angeles in 1895, they had been holiness circuit-riding evangelists for more than twenty years. They began attending the Azusa Street meetings in June of 1906, just two months after the revival began. Rachel told of their first visit to the mission: “As we entered the old building, somehow, I was touched by the presence of God.”¹⁶ Within a month both she and Josie had been baptized in the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues.

Rachel was later licensed to preach by the Azusa Street Mission. There is, however, no record of any major role she played in the mission. Her greatest contribution to the revival is

the fact that in May of 1907 she carried the message of Azusa to Springfield, Missouri. She wrote of her calling to Springfield: “The Lord showed me that I must go back east and tell my mother and brothers and sisters what the Lord had done for me and bring them the blessed message.”¹⁷

When she arrived in Springfield, Rachel began a cottage prayer meeting in her family’s living room. In these home meetings several were filled with the Spirit, including her sister, Lillian Corum, and other family members. As the excitement mounted, Rachel and some volunteers from Joplin purchased a large tent where they held gospel meetings for several weeks. At times the meeting drew large crowds.

Sometime in 1907 Rachel returned to Los Angeles, stayed for a while, and with her husband, Josie, returned to Springfield. For several months the couple travelled throughout the region preaching the gospel and proclaiming the message of Pentecost. It was during this time that she had her famous “sparkling fountain” vision. She wrote about this vision in an article for the *Word and Work* magazine entitled, “A Sparkling Fountain for the Whole Earth”:

There appeared before me a beautiful, bubbling, sparkling fountain in the heart of the city of Springfield. It sprang up gradually but irresistibly and began to flow toward the East and toward the West, toward the North and toward the South, until the whole land was covered with water.¹⁸

Rachel's vision proved to be prophetic, for it was on that very spot that in November of 1913 she and her sister, Lillian, began a church that was to become Central Assembly of God, the "mother church of the Assemblies of God." One year later in April of 1914 in Hot Springs, Arkansas, the Assemblies of God was founded. Seven years later in 1922 Central Bible College, the denomination's first ministerial training school, was begun in the church's basement. Soon a publishing house was added. In 1918 the Assemblies of God moved its headquarters to Springfield where it remains until today.

Possibly more than any other church, the Assemblies of God owes its existence to the Azusa Street revival, for it was from churches birthed during that revival that the denomination was primarily formed. Today the Assemblies of God has become the largest Pentecostal church in the world with more than 366 thousand churches and 67 million constituents worldwide.¹⁹ It has truly become, in the words of Rachel Sizelove, a "sparkling fountain for the whole world."

Julia Hutchins, Lucy Farrow, Jennie Seymour, and Rachel Sizelove are but four of many women who significantly participated in the Azusa Street revival. They and thousands of other unnamed women have powerfully contributed to the spread of Pentecostalism throughout the world. The Pentecostal church is deeply indebted to these courageous women. They have truly helped to make the movement what it is today.

Today God's Spirit is moving across Africa as never before. The Africa Assemblies of God has launched a "Decade of Pentecost" from 2010 to 2020 with the goal of seeing 10 million men and women baptized in the Holy Spirit and mobilized as Spirit-empowered witnesses, church planters, and missionaries to the unreached peoples and places of Africa.²⁰ As never before God is calling on the women of Africa to take their rightful place in the work of harvesting the lost before Jesus' soon return.

African Pentecostal women can take great inspiration from the noble women of Azusa Street, and they can follow their example. They too can seek God, be empowered by His Spirit, and then go out in the Spirit's power to tell others the good news of Christ.

ENDNOTES

¹ “Pentecost Has Come” was the headline on the first edition of *The Apostolic Faith* newspaper published by the Azusa Street Mission in September 1906. The subhead proclaimed, “Los Angeles is Being Visited by a Revival of Bible Salvation and Pentecost as Recorded in the Book of Acts.”

² Estrela Alexander, *The Women of Azusa Street* (Laurel, MD: The Seymour Press), 38.

³ “Testimonies of Outgoing Missionaries.” *The Apostolic Faith*, Vol. I, No. 2, (October 1906).

⁴ Estrela Alexander, 39.

⁵ Frank Ewart, *The Phenomenon of Pentecost* (Hazelwood, MO: World Aflame Press, 1947), 74-76, in Estrela Alexander, *The Women of Azusa Street*, 42.

⁶ Roberts Liardon, *The Azusa Revival*, (Shippensburg, PA: Destin Image Publishers, 2006), 159-160.

⁷ Ethel Goss, *Winds of God* (New York: Cornet Press Books, 1958), 56, in Estrela Alexander, *The Women of Azusa Street*, 44.

⁸ *The Apostolic Faith*, Vol. I. No. 11, (October-January, 1908).

⁹ *The Apostolic Faith*, Vol. 1, No. 7, (April 1907), 1.

¹⁰ Estrela Alexander, 151.

¹¹ Robert Owens, “The Azusa Street Revival: The Pentecostal Movement Begins in America,” *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal*, Vinson Synan, ed. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2001), 48.

¹² *The Apostolic Faith*, Vol I, No. 8, May 1907.

¹³ *The Apostolic Faith*, Vol. I. No. 12, (January 1908).

¹⁴ *The Apostolic Faith* Vol. I, No. 8, (May 1907).

¹⁵ Much of the material in this section is taken from Estrela Alexander, “Chapter 19: Rachel Harper Sizelove,” *The Women of Azusa, Street* (Laurel, MD: The Seymour Press), 166-176.

¹⁶ Rachel Sizelove, “A Sketch of My Life,” unpublished manuscript, 196.

¹⁷ Rachel Sizelove, “A Sparkling Fountain for the Whole Earth,” *Word and Work*, Vol. 56, No. 6 (June 1934), 2.

¹⁸ Rachel Sizelove, “Sparkling Fountain,” 2.

¹⁹ Assemblies of God, 2013 statistical report

²⁰ Decade of Pentecost website: www.DecadeofPentecost.org.

MORE E-BOOKLETS AVAILABLE
FROM AIA PUBLICATIONS

[May be requested from ActsInAfrica@agmd.org]

“Leading Believers into the Baptism in the Holy Spirit”

“Leading a National Church into Pentecostal Revival”

“Maintaining the Spirit-Filled Life”

“The Classroom of the Holy Spirit”

“A Pentecostal Theology of Ministry”

“Developing a Pentecostal Curriculum for the 21st Century”

“How to Preach on the Baptism in the Holy Spirit”

“Training Pentecostal Ministers: Towards an Authentic
Pentecostal Training Model”

OTHER DECADE OF PENTECOST BOOKS

Order @ ActsInAfrica.org

Proclaiming Pentecost: 100 Sermons Outlines on the Power of the Holy Spirit (2011), Associate editor with Mark Turney, editor (Also available in French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Swahili)

Globalizing Pentecostal Missions in Africa (2011)
Editor, with Enson Lwesya
(Also available in French, 2014)

Power for Mission: The Africa Assemblies of God Mobilizing the Reach the Nations (2014)
Editor, with Enson Lwesya

MORE BOOKS BY DENZIL R. MILLER

Available at www.DenzilRMiller.com

Power Ministry: How to Minister in the Spirit's Power (2004)
(Also available in French, Portuguese, Kiswahili,
Malagasy, Kinyarwanda, and Chichewa)

*Empowered for Global Mission: A Missionary Look
at the Book of Acts* (2005)

From Azusa to Africa to the Nations (2005)
(Also available in French, Spanish, and Portuguese)

Acts: The Spirit of God in Mission (2007)

*In Step with the Spirit: Studies in the
Spirit-filled Walk* (2008)

*The Kingdom and the Power: The Kingdom of God:
A Pentecostal Interpretation* (2009)

*Experiencing the Spirit: A Study of the Work of
the Spirit in the Life of the Believer* (2009)

Teaching in the Spirit (2009)

*Power Encounter: Ministering in the Power and
Anointing of the Holy Spirit: Revised* (2009)
(Also available in Kiswahili)

You Can Minister in God's Power: A Guide for Spirit-filled Disciples (2009)

The Spirit of God in Mission: A Vocational Commentary on the Book of Acts (2011)

Proclaiming Pentecost: 100 Sermon Outlines on the Power of the Holy Spirit (2011), Associate editor with Mark Turney, editor (Also available in French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Swahili)

Globalizing Pentecostal Missions in Africa (2011)
Editor, with Enson Lwesya
(Also available in French, 2014)

The 1:8 Promise of Jesus: The Key to World Harvest
(2012)

Power for Mission: The Africa Assemblies of God Mobilizing the Reach the Nations (2014)
Editor, with Enson Lwesya

Missionary Tongues Revisited: More than an Evidence: Recapturing Luke's Missional Perspective on Speaking in Tongues (2014)



THE WOMEN OF AZUSA STREET
© 2015 Denzil R. Miller