

TONGUES OF FIRE

1896

Camp Creek, North Carolina

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ARISE, SHINE; FOR YOUR LIGHT HAS COME! AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD IS RISEN UPON YOU. FOR BEHOLD, THE DARKNESS SHALL COVER THE EARTH, AND DEEP DARKNESS THE PEOPLE, BUT THE LORD WILL ARISE OVER YOU, AND HIS GLORY WILL BE SEEN UPON YOU. THE GENTILES SHALL COME TO YOUR LIGHT, AND KINGS TO THE BRIGHTNESS OF YOUR RISING. Isaiah, Chapter 60, verses 1-3.

Introduction

Now when the day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from Heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to SPEAK WITH OTHER TONGUES as the Spirit gave them utterance. Acts Chapter 2, Verses 1-4.

History did not record the date Pentecostalism lost its fervor and fire in the early Church. There is no record of when Acts Chapter 2 Christianity became extinct for a period of over 1800 years. After the Disciples were martyred and the fires of Pentecost died out, the Church seemed to lose its most precious commodity, the BLESSING of PENTECOST.

Since the Reformation in 1517 when Luther nailed his 95 Theses on the door of the All Saints Church in Wittenberg, Germany, a new and fresh movement of God and a Revival of Holiness began. However, one important commodity was missing from this New Renewal movement---the

Baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in unknown tongues.

The Moravian Church, which originated in the area of Czechoslovakia, actually began the first Reformation some sixty years before Luther. They taught “Holiness” as a lifestyle and sent Missionaries all over the World to preach the Gospel.

We often speak of the resurgence of Revivals which were led by men like Charles Finney, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield and Charles Spurgeon to name a few. However, none of those Revivals, as awesome as they were, experienced the FULL BLESSING of Pentecost. None of these men experienced the TONGUES OF FIRE Blessing of Pentecost in their lifetime.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in unknown tongues resurfaced in the late Nineteen Hundreds in a place called Camp Creek, North Carolina. This little known outpouring of Pentecost predated by 10 years the Azusa Street Outpouring in Los Angeles, California. There were a few instances in the Nineteen Hundreds when an individual or two experienced Tongues of Fire, however they did not start a new MOVEMENT toward Pentecostal Holiness.

All of the Outpourings of Pentecost came about as a result of men and women coming together to pray and seek a closer walk with God. This Book is the Story of Modern Day Pentecost

beginning with the Camp Creek Outpouring in 1896. This Outpouring birthed a new Holiness Movement which spread around the World.

There is going to be a NEW PENTECOSTAL OUTPOURING which will spread around the World in order to bring in a great Harvest of Souls. God is looking for laborers who will “go into all the World to preach the Gospel” without fearing what man can do or will do to them. This NEW PENTECOST, among other things, will be a REVIVAL OF HOLINESS that will help prepare believers for the gathering of the Great Harvest.

Then Jesus said to His disciples, “The HARVEST is truly plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the HARVEST to send out laborers into His HARVEST.” Matthew, Chapter 9, Verses, 37-38.

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Chapter 1

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Pentecost 1896

Now when the day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from Heaven, as of a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them cloven tongues, as of fire, and sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost; and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Acts, Chapter 2, Verses 1-4.

Before the famed Azusa Street Revival in 1906 there was little known about the powerful Pentecostal Revival which preceded the famous Outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Los Angeles, California. This Revival began in 1896 at Camp Creek located near the town of Murphy in Cherokee County, North Carolina. Unlike Azusa Street, the Murphy Revival received very little media coverage. This was probably due to the rural location where the Revival took place.

Although not much attention was given to the Murphy Revival, it was no less significant in terms of validity and importance than the other Outpourings of the era.

In 1886 a former Missionary Baptist Minister by the name of R. G. Spurling started a Fellowship in Cherokee County, North Carolina. This was ten years before the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit took place in the area. Spurling broke with the traditional Baptists in the area over their views on Ecclesiology and other Baptist Theology. Spurling taught there needed to be another Reformation of the Church to rid Churches of tradition and false doctrines. This teaching of a new Reformation did not set well with the leaders of the other churches and denominations in the area.

On August 19, 1886, Spurling, along with eight other parishioners, organized the Christian Union at the Barney Creek Meeting House in Monroe County, Tennessee, located just across the North Carolina State Line. They agreed to distance themselves from man-made doctrines and traditions and become united according to the principles found in the New Testament. Within the next nine years three other Pentecostal Congregations were formed in the area.

In 1896 three Evangelists from Tennessee brought the message of Holiness and Sanctification to Western North Carolina. They began a Revival in the area at the Schearer

Schoolhouse located near Camp Creek in Cherokee County, North Carolina. The School was located just across the Tennessee State Line. This Schoolhouse is where R. G. Spurling began the New Reformation. The three Revivalists were William Martin, Joe Tipton and Milton McNabb.

The Schearer Schoolhouse became the birthplace of the modern day Pentecostal Movement. There was a great Outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the Schoolhouse. Many people, including children, were again speaking in tongues in the meetings as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance. Among those attending the Revival in the Schoolhouse were Baptists, Methodists and a few Presbyterians.

Many people were saved during this Revival. It has been said that over 100 people received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit at the Schearer Schoolhouse during this new Pentecostal Outpouring. A hundred people may not sound like a lot of people, but you must understand we are talking about a rural area in the Mountains of Western North Carolina. This area was sparsely populated and continues to be so even today.

Unfortunately, this new Outpouring of Pentecost did not set well with the traditional Church goers and Pastors who lived in the area. The Revival was demonized and denounced by most Church leaders in the area. The Schearer Schoolhouse was burned to the ground by angry

mobs who were opposed to the new movement. The homes of many of the worshippers who were involved in the Outpouring were also burned to the ground by angry mobs led by Baptist and Methodist Church Leaders.

After the Schearer Schoolhouse was burned, the Revival moved into a Log Church Building across the road from where the Schoolhouse stood. The religious leaders in the area then began to dismantle the Log Church, log by log. However, this action did not deter the people from continuing to seek the Power and Presence of God through their new Pentecostal experience.

William Bryant who assumed leadership of the group after the Log Church was dismantled, moved the Revival into his home. William Bryant had served as a Baptist Deacon prior to becoming involved in the Holiness Movement. In 1902 the small group organized the Holiness Church at Camp Creek. R. G. Spurling, the man who began the New Reformation, worshipped with the Holiness Congregation and was instrumental in helping form the Holiness Church located in Camp Creek, North Carolina.

During the Revival taking place at the Bryant residence local members of other Churches who opposed the Revival threw rocks and fired bullets into his home. Persecution continued to plague the people who attended the Revival. However, the resolve of the people attending the Revival could not be deterred. They

had found a new freedom, power, and purpose for their life in this new Pentecostal experience which could not and would not be extinguished by their persecutors.

Many Bible Scholars have suggested that this Pentecostal Movement which started in North Carolina was the catalyst which paved the way for what happened ten years later on Azusa Street. Whether this is true or not, we do know that God started a movement in Camp Creek, North Carolina, that would not and could not be extinguished. The Fire of God is an Eternal Flame which cannot be extinguished by man or devil, no matter how hard they try. That Fire could not be put out at Calvary no matter how hard the Princes of Darkness tried. The FIRE which burned BRIGHTLY at Camp Creek could not be extinguished, regardless of how God's people were persecuted. The ETERNAL FLAMES of God's "Justice, Judgment and Justification" will always prevail against injustice, darkness, and corruption.

The Pentecostal Fires that burned brightly in Camp Creek can still be felt in areas where the Outpouring began. I believe God is waiting on people to humble themselves in prayer and seek HIS HOLINESS so He can return again with the FIRES of Pentecost which burned so brightly in this area. God is looking for people all over the World who desire a new Outpouring of His Spirit.

Chapter 2

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A. J. TOMLINSON

The Church of God denomination was birthed out of the Revival which was held at Camp Creek. The denomination is currently headquartered in Cleveland, Tennessee. The Church of God traces its origins back to the Reformation started by R. G. Spurling in 1886. At present the Church of God has over six million members in 170 countries, and today is one of the largest Pentecostal denominations in the World.

A J Tomlinson was a former Quaker. He was born on September 22, 1865 near Westfield, Indiana. Tomlinson travelled across the Country selling Bibles until he moved to Western North Carolina and joined the Congregation at Camp Creek in 1902. Soon after joining the Congregation Tomlinson became their Pastor. It was the organizational skills of Tomlinson which would eventually cause the Camp Creek Church to become a denomination. Soon after Tomlinson was installed as Pastor, other Churches were established in Georgia and Tennessee.

In 1906, the same year the Azusa Street Revival began, the Organization of Churches held

its First General Assembly at Camp Creek. This meeting laid the groundwork for the future of the Church of God denomination. Tomlinson served as Moderator and Secretary of the Assembly. In 1907 the name "Church of God" was adopted as the name of the newly founded denomination. In 1909 Tomlinson was elected as the General Overseer of the denomination.

The building which the Organization of Churches met in for the First General Assembly still stands in Camp Creek. This building now belongs to the Church of God of Prophecy. It is one of the Historical buildings and memorials on display in and around the Camp Creek area in North Carolina.

In June of 1907 Tomlinson traveled to Birmingham, Alabama, and attended meetings led by M. M. Pinson and Gaston Cashwell. Cashwell had been baptized in the Holy Spirit while attending the Azusa Street Outpouring in California. Tomlinson invited Cashwell to come to Cleveland, Tennessee. Tomlinson was filled with the Holy Spirit under the Ministry of Cashwell.

Problems arose later between Tomlinson and other Church of God leaders which would culminate in a split in the Organization. In 1923 the Church of God impeached Tomlinson due to some of his questionable financial dealings. Tomlinson had taken offence to implications that he was not trustworthy when it came to financial dealings in the Church Organization. This eventually led to the split in the Church of God.

Tomlinson left the Church of God Organization and formed what would later become known as the “Church of God of Prophecy.” Some 8,000 members of the Church of God left with Tomlinson.

THE FIELDS OF THE WOOD

Lord remember David, and all his afflictions: how he swore unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob; Surely I will not come into the Tabernacle of my house, Nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to my eyes, or slumber to my eyelids, Until I find out a place for the Lord, A habitation for the Mighty God of Jacob. Lo, we heard of it at EPHRATAH: We found it in the FIELDS OF THE WOOD. We will go into His Tabernacles: We will worship at His footstool. Psalms 132, Verses 1-7.

The FIELDS OF THE WOOD is a Christian Theme Park built by the Church of God of Prophecy in the Camp Creek area of North Carolina. This Theme Park is located near the area where the 1896 OUTPOURING of the Holy Spirit fell on the small group of people seeking HOLINESS at Camp Creek.

In Hebrew “EPHRATAH” means ‘fruitfulness.’ EPHRATAH is also another name for Bethlehem, the Town where our Savior Jesus

Christ was born. A new Holiness movement was birthed or reborn in the Camp Creek area during this NEW Outpouring of Pentecost. Surely the CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD had found a NEW BEGINNING where Revival and Restoration would resurrect a new New Testament Church built upon the premise of God's Righteousness and Holiness.

On June 13, 1903, A. J. Tomlinson climbed to the top of Burger Mountain located in the Camp Creek area to pray and seek the Lord for Revelation. While in prayer God revealed to him that His people WERE the Church of God and was to be so called. God gave him further Revelation that the Church of God was to take the WHOLE Bible, rightly dividing it, as their only Rule of Practice. When Tomlinson came down off the mountain he shared the Revelation God had given him with his Congregation. After Tomlinson shared with them the revelation God had given him, they changed the name of the Church to the "Church of God." After splitting from the Church of God denomination Tomlinson called the name of the new denomination the Church of God of Prophecy.

Some years later the Church of God of Prophecy bought 210 acres of land in the Camp Creek area. Burger Mountain was part of the 210 acres they purchased and was the place where Tomlinson received his Divine Revelation. Also included in the 210 acres was the Meeting House where the First Assembly of the Church of God

took place, as well as the property where the Schearer Schoolhouse stood.

The Church of God of Prophecy built a Biblical Theme Park called the “Fields of the Wood” on the property surrounding Burger Mountain. Work began on the Fields of the Wood on November 15, 1940, and was completed in 1945. The property was named “Fields of the Wood” because its purpose was reflected in the Scriptures found in Psalms 132. It was to be a place of HABITATION for the Lord, a Holy Place set apart where people could come and cohabit with God.

The Fields of the Wood has a replica of Golgotha’s Hill, as well as the largest altar in the World. It has a replica of the Tomb where Christ’s Body was laid after His Crucifixion. The Park has the largest set of Ten Commandments made of stone in the World today. The Ten Commandments Memorial lays embedded on the side of a mountain in the Theme Park directly across from Burger Mountain. There is a place called “Prayer Mountain” where one can read Scriptures written on monuments as they walk up the steps to the top of Burger Mountain. There are other Memorials in the Park, including a Baptismal, and a Gift Shop. The Flags of All Nations stand on top of the mountain just past the location of the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments can be seen from orbit. There is also a Restaurant and Gift Shop just to name a few. Fields of the Wood is open year round, and

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