



The grapefruit tree

By
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For Pentecostals, Acts 2 is in a category by itself. We look there at the events in the Upper Room as foundational to modern-day spiritual power.

The same is true experientially for the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles. Historic spiritual geography is there, where in 1906 another “sound of a rushing mighty wind” blew upon waiting, hungry souls. And so emerged the 20th-century Pentecostal Movement.

The 18th Pentecostal World Conference met in May 2005 in Los Angeles to celebrate the worldwide spread of God’s blessing through all those whose organizational roots can be traced to 1906.

On the last day of the conference, a large gathering of leaders met at the Azusa Street site, now home to a Japanese/American Cultural

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and Community Center. With the center’s permission, a grapefruit tree was planted to replace the only other living thing that was present there in 1906, another grapefruit tree that had been growing and producing for more than 125 years. All other vestiges of Azusa Street’s past have been bulldozed, covered over with cement and modernized.

Before the original tree was removed, a significant piece of it was carefully cut and grafted into the new tree as it was planted. Thus, the new grapefruit tree, with the old grafted into the new, stands and grows as the only remaining natural life left there that can be identified with 1906. It is hoped the newly grafted tree will remain healthy and carry forward its life to new generations.

But that Azusa Street grapefruit tree is not the only living thing identified with 1906. Other living organisms are now multiplying around the world.

The life of Azusa Street is not the geography, the ground or the building. The life came from God, whose eternal mind planned our redemption at the Cross, gifted us with the Holy Spirit baptism in Acts 2, and overflowed that blessing to the waiting people of Azusa Street in 1906.

They then took that life, and with the Spirit’s help, began grafting it into their sons and daughters, into the towns, villages and countries of the world.

That same life was grafted into their neighbors, friends and townsmen.

The next generation was touched, then the next, then the next.

God has no grandchildren, and

there is no sacred soil into which He will put His Holy Spirit other than the waiting, hungry soil of our hearts.

The life of Azusa Street is within you now. God grafts that eternally present life into succeeding generations as you and I are faithful to give away this great gift of heaven whenever and wherever God puts us to the task.

I was preaching at First Assembly of God in Shafter, Calif., about Pentecostal issues. I asked rhetorically if anybody there knew the most famous and important address for Pentecostal people worldwide. I was ready to tell them it was 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles.

Almost instantly, however, a nice lady sitting in the middle of the sanctuary burst out with, “I know. It’s 150 Elm Street!”

That stopped me cold. *Where is 150 Elm Street?* I wondered.

I quickly looked over to the pastor, who had a huge grin on his face.

“That’s our church address,” he said.

The lady was right. And it is always the right answer. The most famous and important Pentecostal address is where you are right now. Where you live. Where you worship. Where you work.

May the Lord help us to always know our real home address.

Breathe afresh on us, O Holy Spirit! **tpe**

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