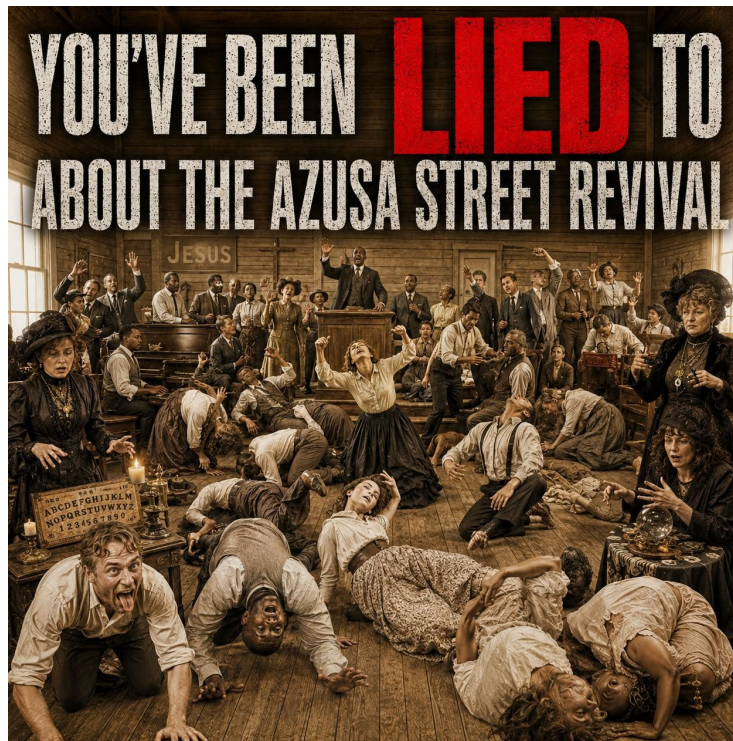


The Wright Report

You've Been Lied to About the Azusa Street Revival

DAN LIRETTE

1



This is a long post because it deals with the *actual* history of the Azusa Street Revival and how modern leaders have re-written the narrative. I was wrong about the Azusa Street Revival ... and I want to update my position officially. Special thanks to brother Jerry Fuller for challenging me on this.

And before I go any further, let me say from the get-go that I believe in God's power; that He works powerfully today, heals the sick, leads us by His Spirit, etc. I'm not rejecting Biblical revival or the genuine moving of God's Spirit; I'm rejecting a false historical account on a revival that resembles the Toronto Blessing more than the Book of Acts.

The church has been given a "cleaned-up" version of the Azusa Street Revival. We've been told that Azusa was the greatest revival since the book of Acts where the only things happening were prayer meetings, preaching the Gospel, speaking in Biblical tongues and having genuine encounters with God's power. After looking at the history of the revival objectively, I've found that leaders within the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements

WWW.LIONANDLAMBAPOLOGETICS.ORG

© 2026 LION AND LAMB APOLOGETICS — 1305 CHESTER STREET — CLEBURNE, TX 76033

The Wright Report

have rewritten history to fit a narrative that's simply not accurate. What's always left out are the Toronto Blessing type manifestations that were in these meetings as well as the occultists and spiritualists who were mixed in.

Azusa's own newspaper, *The Apostolic Faith*, is where you can find what happened. It talks about people falling out, shaking violently and uncontrollably and experiencing "the jerks" (uncontrollable twitching like we see in Hinduism's Kundalini meetings). William Durham "testified" that the power came on him and made him jerk and quake for three hours, moving through different parts of his body before he started speaking in tongues. Another testimony talks about being shaken "like a locomotive." People would jump up and start running, jumping, violently shaking, spinning in circles, falling out onto the floor, jerking, kicking and rolling around. Some people weren't able to move at all for hours; they were.... stuck in position. There was also "howling" (yes, like wolves) people babbling... and no; it wasn't "speaking in tongues"; it was babbling nonsense. It's a historical fact as the record shows there were also animal manifestations where people barked like dogs and hooting like owls.

This is why decades later the church was ready and even eager to call the Toronto Blessing a revival; but it wasn't. It was a demonic counterfeit of Biblical revival. The Toronto Blessing was the offspring of Azusa with its uncontrollable shaking and jerking, ungodly spasmodic bodily movements, unholy laughter and its own animal-manifestations. They weren't identical movements, but the parallels in manifestations can't be ignored.

Even Charles Parham, William Seymour teacher and one of the fathers of Pentecostalism would come to denounce what he saw at Azusa. Parham was concerned about people throwing fits, having strange bodily contortions, rolling and kicking on the floor. He claimed that Azusa was full of fleshly manifestations, hypnosis and occultic manifestations. Even Frank Bartleman, one of Azusa's greatest defenders, admitted they had spiritualists and hypnotists coming into the meetings. Bartleman wrote that the revival's greatest danger was "the working of evil spirits within." Think about that.

The leaders of the revival itself never said, "Strange manifestations are happening. Let's stop them and return to biblical order." According to Bartleman's record, they said, "We dared not call the attention of the people too much to the working of the evil... We could only pray," showing they held the position that both godly and demonic manifestations were happening as a mixture... and didn't want to interfere too aggressively as they felt they may be interfering with the Lord's Spirit moving at the same time as evil spirits.

So why are we given a version of Azusa where it's presented as though it was the world's greatest revival outside of the Book of Acts? The Bible never shows us that violent,

The Wright Report

uncontrollable shaking or the same “jerks” and “twitches” as seen in Kundalini meetings is the work of the Holy Spirit; on the contrary, these things are not the working of God’s Spirit at all. Scripture never gives barking, animal noises, rolling around, violent jerking or bizarre bodily contortions as evidence that someone is being baptized in the Holy Spirit. Acts 2 certainly contains supernatural manifestations, but the real miracle was recognizable languages proclaiming the mighty works of God, followed by solid preaching where 3000 souls came to faith in Jesus in one day.

3

Paul specifically says that spiritual encounters in a gathering must have self-control and order: “the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets” and “God is not the author of confusion” (1 Corinthians 14:32–33). He finishes by instructing that everything be done “decently and in order” (v. 40). Azusa Street doesn’t fall under any of this. If anything, it falls more in line with modern revivals that are clearly outside of Biblical norms.

I have no doubt that people were converted at Azusa and I also have no doubt that the Lord genuinely worked in the lives of many who went to it. I personally believe that the interracial fellowship was the greatest miracle of the revival, especially in America’s 1906 times.

But that doesn’t equate to the revival being a genuine revival. God can move anywhere, at any time and for any purpose He wants to; He’s God. The problem here is that we’ve been given a romanticized version of Azusa that leaves out the jerking, shaking, rolling, barking, twitching, altered states of consciousness, hypnotism, spiritualism and the inside warnings from people who were actually there.

The kinds of manifestations that happened at Toronto were some of the most demonic in church history ... and some of them mimic what happened at Azusa. Why are Pentecostals and Charismatics who reject Toronto baptizing Azusa as “one of the world’s greatest revivals”? It’s because they’ve been lied to... and most have no idea that Azusa’s doctrines and manifestations were closer to the Toronto Blessing than the Book of Acts.

A manifestation doesn’t suddenly become “Biblical” just because it happened during a famous revival in 1906 where modern Charismatic leaders have covered up the full scope of just how bizarre it truly was. The historical record testifies against the modern idea that Azusa Street was the “purest revival since Acts.” No... it wasn’t. Not by a long shot.

NOTE: This post is in compliance with the Fair Use clause of the US Copyright Act of 1976 (17 U.S. Code § 107). The US Supreme Court has issued several major decisions clarifying and reaffirming the fair use doctrine since the 1980s, most recently in the 2021 decision *Google LLC v. Oracle America, Inc.*