

AN APOSTOLIC APPRAISAL OF ASBURY

I here offer my humble and, I confess, my ignorant assessment (since I have not personally witnessed it firsthand) of what has been called the “Asbury Revival” or, perhaps, the “Asbury Phenomenon.” Taking my vantage point only from what I have read or heard from others that have either been to the event itself or offered their views concerning the happenings at the private Christian university in Wilmore, KY. So, as I stated, my observations are not observations (as in an eyewitness account) at all; however, being fairly grounded in the workings of the Spirit in the Apostolic Faith, I believe I can offer some studious observations or at least a few assumptions, and even perhaps even a few spiritually and scriptural conclusions, concerning the much wondered at event transpiring in the small university of Asbury.

As is probably common among us who are Apostolic, we automatically are drawn to and interested in any event where it is avouched that “God is working.” Since our spiritual way of life is bound up in the “God-is-working” concept, it is natural then that we take notice of happenings that are credited to God. As Apostolic believers, it is those kinds of supernatural actions that are a part of our prayers and our worship to the One and only Savior of men—Jesus Christ.

It is also true that we are correctly cautious of happenings that are deemed to be taken outside of the doctrinal boundaries of the Apostolic faith—where we are, at first glance, scrutinizing it more than socializing it. And that stance, at first, is a wise choice lest we run into places where angels fear to tread. Correct scriptural assessment is necessary, for it can then dictate how we are to proceed. Waiting for the movement in the Mulberry treetops is vital to victory.

So, is the event at the university truly a “God-is-working” event? Perhaps you may be dismayed at my answer, which is “yes and no.” In the essence of fulness of doctrinal truth, the answer is “no.” It is not debatable that the university leadership falls far short of the Acts 2:38 salvation message—they simply do not and did not found the event which transpired at their university on the basis of salvific doctrine. However, it appears that there was an initial response to a simple message of repentance—and in that initial response, it appears that God stirred hearts to seek Him in a repentant way—so in that venue, the answer is “yes.” God truly responds to hunger and thirst of a seeking heart.

Quite simply, as I have learned, is that the type of prayer and worship which was ongoing in the university chapel could easily be found in most of our Apostolic

churches either in the prayer service before a service on a typical Sunday evening or certainly in an altar service after the preaching. In other words, among the apostolic ranks, it would be deemed a “normal” Sunday service. However, what transpired at Ashbury was far from normal—to *them!* And this abnormal response was quickly noticed by others to whom it was also not normal, and this attracted even more participants who joined in to, what was to them, an extraordinary move of God. This movement of simple repentance was far from what the Azusa Street movement was in scale and scope.

And, of course, the Asbury event began to draw several segments of people—the spiritually hungry, the spiritually curious, the vultures, the eagles, the camera focus seekers, and the news gatherers. It also brought a few individuals who came to help give an answer to those that cried, “What meaneth this?” and brought the Acts 2:38 message to them. It is for those responders that we give thanks! Without the salvation message, the Asbury movement would lack the culmination of a true “God-is-working” experience!

Our earnest prayers, then, should be that God continues His work in Asbury and wherever hungry hearts yearn for truth to send laborers into the field that are white unto harvest. May God, Who is Sovereign, be given all the glory which His cross has made possible by the precious Blood of Jesus Christ, whereby we must be saved!

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