

## Book Review

*A Reader in Pentecostal Theology*

**Edited by Douglas Jacobsen**

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Douglas Jacobsen and Indiana University Press have done a service to Pentecostals everywhere but especially to students of Pentecostal historical theology with the publication of *A Reader in Pentecostal Theology: Voices from the First Generation*. Jacobsen's objective is to demonstrate the chief sources of early Pentecostal thinking that laid the foundation for Pentecostal and Charismatic theologizing over the last one hundred years. Notably solid cases of Pentecostal foundation-laying, friendly disputes, antagonistic confrontations, and even show-biz eccentricities are illustrated in the observations of the personalities and proclamations of sixteen Pentecostal pioneering pillars.

In the chronological order of each thinker's publications, Jacobsen has put forth a biographical sketch on sixteen of the most outstanding influencers—theologians, denominational founders, or flamboyant preachers—upon the early Pentecostal movement. Each sketch is followed by writing or sermon samples from each of these early Pentecostal thinkers. The acknowledged pioneers include two Euro-American women: Maria Woodworth-Etter and Aimee Semple McPherson; five African-American men:

William Seymour, Richard Spurling, Garfield T. Haywood, Robert C. Lawson, and Charles H. Mason; and eight Euro-American men: Charles F. Parham, George F. Taylor, D. Wesley Myland, William H. Durham, A. J. Tomlinson, Joseph H. King, E. William Kenyon, and F. F. Bosworth. Persian immigrant Andrew David Urshan is also included.

Jacobsen helps students of Pentecostal history learn the original sources of the twenty-first century's ongoing debates surrounding: (1) "Jesus Only" teachings versus Trinitarian understanding of God (Haywood, Urshan); (2) health and wealth, Kingdom authority teachings (Kenyon); (3) the disappointment with race relations in the Pentecostal world (Seymour, Lawson); (4) advocates of high-powered Christian organizationalism (Tomlinson, McPherson); (5) restorationism to book of Acts Christianity (Spurling); as well as the more familiar (6) Spirit-baptism as the first, second, or third work of grace and the whole issue of the "finished work" (Durham, Myland). Jacobsen's introduction to the text juxtaposes the various characters in terms of their respective controversial emphases.

There can be little doubt that Pentecostal thought has never been monolithic. But the current differences in contemporary Pentecostal and Charismatic teachings largely find their initial reflections in sincere theological attempts to deal with the new and profound religious experience early Pentecostals confronted during the first three decades of the twentieth-century. Most all of the points of theological contention had long been under considerable discussion prior to the initial adoption of what would become the *Statement of Fundamental Truths* in the original 1927 Assemblies of God constitution and by-laws.

One example of vital contribution to contemporary Pentecostal issues is the recorded teaching of Maria Woodworth-Etter. While she laid important groundwork for expectation for a fresh outpouring of Pentecostal power as early as 1894, she also challenged traditional Christian thinking on the role of women in ministry. It was not a case of her challenging Christian traditionalists merely by her own practice of outstanding ministry as others have often done since, but Woodworth-Etter openly confronted a chauvinistic Christian society. This undoubtedly helped the first generation of modern Pentecostals more readily value women in ministry. But the struggle in Pentecostal ranks on this matter continues. Moderns would be wise to witness her argumentation as laid out in part in Jacobsen's work.

A second example of Jacobsen's work is his discussion of the "initial evidence" controversy as traced back to Charles Parham and F. F. Bosworth. Parham was the first to declare *tongues-speaking* to be the initial

evidence of Spirit-baptism. Bosworth, one of the 1914 founders of the AG, contended that tongues were but one sign of Spirit-baptism and offered that many *non-tongues-speakers* had been more dramatically used of God than many tongues people he had known. Bosworth's 1917 challenge to the AG position and subsequent defrocking is included in the text.

Douglas Jacobsen presents the essential argumentation offered by these sixteen pillars in a succinct and highly useful manner. My criticism of his work would center on his conviction that early Pentecostals were immersed in dispensationalism along with much of the Evangelical world. But it appears the Pentecostal fascination with Darby/Scofield dispensationalist thought only begins to crystallize with Frank Boyd in 1925 and was later more fully expounded in AG circles by E. S. Williams and Ralph Riggs in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. I was disappointed not to find George Floyd Taylor's and David Wesley Myland's teachings on the deep sense of Pentecostal fraternity with the Zionist movement mentioned, apart from a brief "Latter Rain" allusion to nineteenth-century rainfall. The sense of bond between early Pentecostalism and the revival of the Jewish homeland generated a broad conviction of fraternal twin restorations to first-century points of departure that would culminate in the Second Coming.

Jacobsen seems to have fully overlooked the long-standing twentieth-century Pentecostal sense of affinity with "All Israel." Nonetheless, I believe his work should be a welcomed addition to any serious student of Pentecostal history.