

Review of Leah Payne, *Gender and Pentecostal Revivalism: Making a Female Ministry in the Early Twentieth Century* (CHARIS: Christianity and Renewal – Interdisciplinary Studies), New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, ISBN: 1137494670

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During the past few decades, gender studies has had little focus on the role of female ministers in revival Protestant movements such as Pentecostalism. This recently published book of Leah Payne, can therefore be seen as an introduction to a very important research topic: that of female revivalist ministers and their role in the history of American Protestantism. Payne's study is based on the analysis of two prominent first-generation Pentecostal preachers – Maria Woodworth-Etter and Aimee Semple McPherson and their revivalist influence in the early-twentieth century American religious landscape. In the face of a lack of in-depth studies on these intriguing religious figures, the book aims to fill the gap in existing religious and gender studies scholarship, offering a theoretically-based, interdisciplinary study.

Since the research topic can be approached interdisciplinary, the author is aware of shortcomings as a consequence of using only theological or historical approach. Payne is focusing on the two ministers' practices as revivalists, avoiding narrowing this study to their doctrines or the history of the denominations they were affiliated with. This study seeks to contextualize women's achievements within Pentecostal movement, their mutual influences and developments. Choosing two influential and powerful women preachers for her research, Payne is analyzing how gender was shaped Pentecostal revivalism at the beginning of twentieth century.

The book has six chapters and a conclusion. In the introductory chapter, Payne introduces biographies, first that of Maria Woodworth-Etter (1844–1924) and her encounter with the Disciples of Christ church service, where she was baptized at the age of 13. The Disciples of Christ was a mainline Protestant denomination with reformed orientation emerged in the United States in the 19th century. Woodworth-Etter joined the Pentecostal movement in her late 50s and soon after she was considered to be one of its most powerful leaders (p. 4).

Another fascinating personality Payne is introducing in the book, is Aimee Semple McPherson (1890–1944), an evangelist woman known as Sister Aimee, founder of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel in 1927. Both Woodworth-Etter and McPherson became authoritative celebrity ministers during the 1890s and 1920s in the era of ‘male public leadership.’ Examining how Woodworth-Etter and McPherson used Bible authority in Pentecostalism, the author builds the argument that Pentecostalism was different from holiness/Wesleyan groups (Nazarenes, Wesleyans, Free Methodists), but also from other Protestant groups. Alongside emotive worship, practice of *glossolalia* or speaking in tongues, faith healing and prophecies was characteristic of Pentecostalism. Based on the case study of these two female evangelists, Payne shows how gender was constructed in this era of predominantly male ministry. She analyzes what strategies were employed by these women for gathering new groups of people keen to follow them. Contrary to many other Protestant brands, Pentecostalism was allowing public speech for women.

The first chapter of the book entitled ‘“Truly Manly”: The Ideal American Minister’ analyses the use of newspapers and monographs between 1890s and 1920s in which gender binaries were articulated. Based on these printed sources, Payne shows how the ideal minister was gendered as an ideal middle-class white man (p. 16). On the other hand, women employed various strategies to lead congregations in a time when the idea of authoritative female ministry was rare. Women ministers had to show their respectability and authoritative role within congregations they were leading, but also their womanliness. Woodworth-Etter and McPherson were skilled preachers, as Payne stresses, and used their talent and self-promotion to attract new followers. They were not using stereotypical masculinity to reinforce their preaching and authority. What is surprising for both ministers is that they didn’t have conventional seminary education; Woodworth-Etter had elementary education, while McPherson had high-school diploma. On the other hand, they were both self-educated and informed in methods of ministry (p. 6).

The second chapter, ‘“Walking Bibles”: Narrating Female Pentecostal Ministry’ shows how Woodworth-Etter and McPherson used the Bible to authorize their female ministry. As for other Evangelicals, in Pentecostal theology the most important source of authority is the Bible. However, debates over the role and permission of women ministry were highly present in many Protestant churches in that period. These two remarkable women used the Bible to create a new identity based on different readings of Scripture that departed from mainline interpretations.

The author mentions an interesting quote of Woodworth-Etter ‘God wants us to be walking Bibles,’ which describes very well the role of the construction of Biblically inspired counter-narratives in creating their new female minister identity within Pentecostalism. In creating their life story narrative in preaching or writing, Woodworth-Etter and McPherson did not represent themselves as divorced, single mothers with scandalous histories. Instead, ‘Woodworth-Etter was the Mother of Israel who leads God’s people to a final eschatology, and McPherson was the lover, confidant, and a bride of the coming bridegroom, Jesus’ (p. 62).

‘“Pats Don’t Make Preachers”: The Image of a Female Pentecostal Minister’ is the title of the third chapter, which focuses on women attire and the body as an instrument of representation and identity construction. In the late nineteenth

and early twentieth century, the ideal revivalist minister body was 'a fit, conservatively groomed, suited white male' (p. 17). Men were projecting power and authority through dress. Woodworth-Etter and McPherson constructed their visual representations of their biblical identities as mother and bride, instead of traditional ministerial look. This chapter is enriched with photographs of Woodworth-Etter and McPherson attire in various occasions.

Chapter 4, "'A Glorious Symbol": Building a female Pentecostal Worship Space,' is dedicated to the construction of sacred places for the Woodworth-Etter and McPherson meetings. Those places were very important since they were symbolically showing the power of ministers. Creating a sacred space in the revivalist era (1890–1920) was a challenge for women ministers. Woodworth-Etter usually preached in temporary modest tabernacles, McPherson worship spaces were different, from revivalist tents to tabernacle and a permanent place of worship in Los Angeles, which she named the Angelus Temple.

In the fifth chapter, "'Thunder" and "Sweetness": the Authority and Gender in Pentecostal Performance,' focuses on worship services and preaching performance. Pentecostal revivalist preaching is seen as a ritualized act. As Payne explains, those ritualized practices created a compelling public persona who became valued more than theological reasoning as such. Chapter 6 entitled "'A Regular Jezebel": Female Ministry, Pentecostal Ministry on Trial' highlights the acceptance of both Woodworth-Etter and McPherson as female ministers by their enthusiastic followers, but also discusses instances when they were excluded and criticized. These criticisms, however, made them even more well-known in the public sphere. Both women were put on trial. Woodworth-Etter, was put on trial because her opponents believed that she was hypnotizing men to get them to follow her. McPherson's opponents accused her for using her sexuality to attract her followers.

In the conclusion, Leach Payne describes the impact of both Woodworth-Etter and McPherson in terms of theology and ministry, emphasizing the role of their legacy in the Pentecostal movement and their significance for the study of revivalism and gender in the period between 1890s and 1920s. Payne's conclusion is that both Woodworth-Etter and McPherson used the Bible to create a womanly model of leadership, utilizing revivalist worship spaces to proclaim the message of their womanliness and ministry. They achieved authority through Pentecostal preaching performance (p. 131). Through the chapters in the book, performance brings explanation for strengthening of their authority as female ministers. This is a study of a rare example of Christian women's public speech in the late 19th and early 20th century. Based on very rich material, the book *Gender and Pentecostal Revivalism* is a fascinating historical journey through the process of establishing legitimacy as a woman pastor in the early twentieth century. Therefore, this book represents a valuable contribution to the history of American revivalism, religion and gender studies and to the further research of female evangelists.