

4 Revolutionaries Who Saw Revival Change Their Worlds

The Trail of Fire tour has come to Dallas, where in 1912 a historic move of God took place and shook the region. At the center of this revival was a controversial woman who was pioneering a path for many who would follow.

Her name was Maria Woodworth-Etter. Though Maria was 68 years old and a woman, she didn't let either deter her from fulfilling her call. She had become a national phenomenon and a prominent voice in the Pentecostal movement and proved that a woman could take a central role in revival, a fact that was demonstrated by the remarkable signs, wonders and miracles that followed her ministry.

Pastor Fred Bosworth invited Maria to come participate in an ongoing revival that had been taking place for the past 17 months at the Dallas Fair Grounds. News of the upcoming meetings with Woodworth-Etter attracted thousands from across the United States and even as far away as Canada.

Five thousand people were in attendance that first night. They had come by train and wagon and were now eagerly awaiting her arrival under the large tent that Bosworth had dubbed the Apostolic Tabernacle.

Also in attendance that night was a large number of sick and disabled individuals who had been carried in on cots or rolled in with wheelchairs. For some it was a disturbing sight, but for Etter, it was a scene filled with opportunity!

Woodworth-Etter had grown over the years in the anointing. Though she was petite in stature, she was a spiritual giant. As she spoke that night, the power of God descended upon the crowd. Hundreds of men and women began to fall to the ground like stalks of wheat blown over by a strong wind. This was a

common sign in her meetings that she often spoke of as the fulfillment of a vision she received the night she answered the call to ministry. Some would lay there in a trance like state for hours, often having visions of heaven or hell.

As the meeting progressed, Woodworth-Etter called for those sick in body to come forward. One of the first to approach the platform was a backslidden man who had come from several hundred miles away. He had recently fallen from a ladder and broken three ribs. The bones were turned into the lungs. He arrived that night in incredible pain. Woodworth-Etter laid her hands directly on the man's chest. He flinched and keeled over in pain. Then, to the surprise of the man and the audience, the pain left. He heard his ribs snap back into place. He was so overwhelmed that he surrendered his life to Jesus right upon that spot. He then stood before the crowd testifying to the miracle, beating the side of his body with a closed fist to prove he was completely healed.

Also in the meeting was a woman who arrived on a gurney. She was suffering severely from cancer in her stomach as well as tuberculosis. She was nothing but skin and bones with little life left in her. The best doctors in Dallas had given up on her and had sent her home to die. It wasn't advisable for her to be taken from her home, yet she was willing to take the risk. Her family thought she might pass that evening. They patiently waited for the evangelist to come pray for her.

Pastor Fred Bosworth watched intently as Woodworth-Etter laid hands on the woman. It took only a few moments for life to return to her body. She stood up from her gurney instantly healed of both conditions. She began shouting and praising the Lord, along with all those in attendance. The woman didn't miss a meeting after that night and often testified during the revival.

Woodworth-Etter would stay in Dallas through the end of the year. It was one of the greatest revivals the city of Dallas

had ever seen. Even Etter and Bosworth would later comment that the Dallas meetings were the most powerful of their respective ministries.

Dallas, Texas is home for my family and was state No. 9 on our tour. We came with great expectation after having received numerous words from respected saints concerning God's desire for the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex. The meetings themselves were truly extraordinary. We saw many salvations along with several signs and wonders.

It was truly a highlight to come to the historic fair grounds and pray at the site of Maria Woodworth-Etter's meetings. Why? For one, Maria's story is one of my favorites from Trail of Fire as it demonstrates that God is no respecter of persons with regard to who He will use to fan the flames of revival. Maria stood and spoke up in a time when women were expected to sit and be silent. It is a shame that history has often focused too heavily on the men who shook their nation while missing the women who also contributed. If you take a closer look at some of your favorite historic moves of God, you will often find a woman at the core of those fires who also played a significant role.

For instance, it was Susanna Wesley who gave her son the spiritual foundation that led John Wesley to spark a national awakening in England. It could be said that Wesley's Methodism was first developed and proven in the home of Susanna Wesley. Susanna reached John before John reached the world.

In the Cape Town revival of 1860, it was a young Dutch woman named Miss Van Berk who sparked the great move of God in South Africa. She carried a burden for the neglected African people and as such she was the first to see something even her own minister missed. Revival came as an answer to her intercession.

Likewise, the evangelist Duncan Campbell became the

beneficiary of the answered prayers of two elderly sisters, Peggy and Christine Smith. They were the ones who first carried that burden. They prayed until revival became a reality.

God can and will use anyone—male or female, young or old, regardless of race or economic status. Anyone can be a candidate to be used in the next great move of God. The only requirement is a willingness to go.

Maria Woodworth-Etter discovered this, and it became the secret to her success. She simply had faith in God's Word. He said, "And it will be that, afterwards, I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; then your sons and your daughters will prophesy" (Joel 2: 28a). That verse was enough for her, and with faith in that word, she was used to touch a nation.

My friend, the same is true today as well. God is still pouring out His Spirit upon all flesh. It is time the sons and daughters receive that outpouring and become prophetic voices to their generation. Who knows, perhaps the next great move of God is already stirring within you, just waiting to break out.

If you'd like to read more about Maria-Woodworth Etter, pick up a copy of *Trail of Fire*. *Trail of Fire* shares true stories from ten historic moves of God and encourages the reader to break free from the dry, dull routine of religion and become catalyst for revival. {eoa}

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