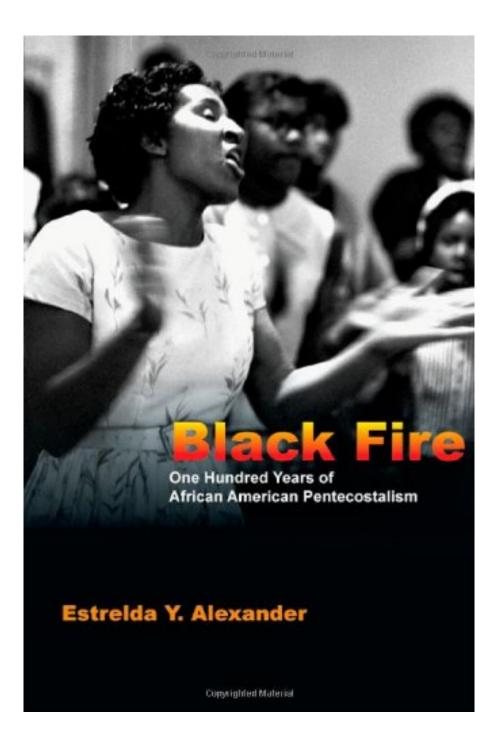


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Review

"This book will provide its readers with a valuable overview of important monuments and figures from the past one hundred years. It presents a straightforward account of how African American Pentecostalism developed and changed over time. Because of the scope of this work, it will be helpful for general audiences who want to learn more about this topic or for use in an undergraduate course." (Monica Reed, H-Net Pentecostalism, May 2014)

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Estrelda Alexander was raised in an urban, black, working-class, oneness Pentecostal congregation in the 1950s and 1960s, but she knew little of her heritage and thought that all Christians worshiped and believed as she did. Much later she discovered that many Christians not only knew little of her heritage but considered it strange. Even today, most North Americans remain ignorant of black Pentecostalism. Black Fire remedies lack of historical consciousness by recounting the story of African American Pentecostal origins and development. In this fascinating description she covers

- what Pentecostalism retained from African spirituality
- the legacy of the nineteenth-century black Holiness movement
- William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival
- African American trinitarian and oneness Pentecostal denominations
- the role of women in African American Pentecostalism
- African American neo-Pentecostals and charismatic movements
- black Pentecostals in majority-white denominations
- theological challenges of black Pentecostalism in the twenty-first century

Whether you come from an African American Pentecostal background or you just want to learn more, this book will unfold all the dimensions of this important movement's history and contribution to the life of the church.

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An Excellent One-Volume Introduction to African American Pentecostalism

By George P. Wood

Like many white American Pentecostals, I know very little about my African American co-religionists. I know about William Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival, of course. I am aware of the Church of God in Christ, which is the largest Pentecostal denomination in America. And as an Assemblies of God minister, I am familiar with my own denomination's struggle with racism. But beyond these items, my knowledge of black Pentecostalism is negligible.

Or, rather, was until Estrelda Y. Alexander's Black Fire introduced me to the rich history and spirituality of African American Pentecostals. I learned from her how Pentecostalism's characteristically exuberant worship drew on the rhythms of African spirituality. I learned the vital role the Holiness movement played in the formation of black Pentecostalism. Her chapter on William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival is the

best one-chapter summary of that pivotal moment in Pentecostal history I have read. I discovered how influential Oneness Pentecostalism is in the black community. I grew to appreciate the struggles my co-religionists have faced not only in predominantly white denominations but also in forming predominantly black denominations. And Alexander's book sensitized me to the double discrimination African American women faced in becoming leaders because of both their color and their sex.

I heartily recommend Black Fire to anyone interested in the history of American Pentecostalism. If you do not understand the vital role that African Americans have played both in leading this movement and in populating its churches and ministries, then you simply have not understood the movement. Alexander's book is thoroughly documented, contains two brief bibliographies (or primary and secondary sources), as well as name and subject indices. It is useful, therefore, to readers who want a one-volume introduction to the subject as well as to students who would like to do further research but are unsure where to start.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Black Fire: One Hundred Years of African American Pentecostalism

By kim ferguson

Alexander providers the reader with a detailed history of both the influences and actions of African Americans during the first century of Pentecostalism. Her offering is thoughtful, thorough and insightful. It is also written in a way that everyone can understand the story.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Black Fire

By Amazon Customer

This anthology is excellent. The scholarly research and insights provided in an easy to read narrative style, makes this an asset to any personal library. this important piece of religious history is needed to piece together the experience of African Americans throughout the ages.

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