

# a.a. Boddy (1854-1930)

by Keith Malcomson

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*A.A. Boddy's life and ministry exemplify a godly leader who prioritized unity, protection, and care, playing a vital role in the Pentecostal movement and leaving a lasting legacy.*

**Scripture:** Acts 1:8, 1 Corinthians 13:4, Ephesians 4:3, Philippians 2:3, 1 Peter 5:2

**Topics:** "Pentecostal Movement", "Spiritual Leadership"

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## Description

Keith Malcomson preaches about the life and ministry of A.A. Boddy, a key figure in the early Pentecostal movement. Boddy's journey from a solicitor to a spiritual leader in the Anglican Church was marked by encounters with influential figures like Bishop Lightfoot and significant spiritual experiences. He played a crucial role in preparing a spiritual people for a move of God, leading fervent prayer meetings and being a part of the Pentecostal League. Despite facing opposition and challenges, Boddy's dedication to unity and his heart of love and care left a lasting impact on the Pentecostal movement.

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## Transcript

Alexander Alfred Boddy or A.A. Boddy as he is more often known by was born in 1854, the son of an Anglican minister. As a young man he trained as a solicitor but when he came under the spiritual atmosphere of Keswick (deeper life conference) when he attended their convention in 1876 he met a crises point in life. This was the means to bring him into ministry in the Anglican Church. One of the great influences upon his life at this time was Bishop Lightfoot who was famed for his commentaries; it was Lightfoot who ordained and sent him to Sunderland. Boddy was a very well travelled man, exploring western Canada, Egypt, North Africa, Palestine and Russia.

It was not until 1892 that he found true salvation in Christ and recieved justification through the Blood, forgiveness and peace with God. He was now fitted for the task of raising up a spritual people in his church. Upon hearing of the Welsh revival of 1904 immediately he went to see. While there he attempted to invit Evan Roberts to Sunderland, but without success. All this stirred up fervent continual prayer meetings for a move of God in his church. A people were being prepared for an outpouring of the Spirit. He was a leading figure of the Pentecostal League, a holiness movement which drew great crowds to its meetings and was strong in Sunderland. Later the leader, Reader Harris would become a strong opponent of the Pentecostals and denounced tongues as satanic.

In 1906 Boddy heard of the outpouring in L.A. and when the same took place under T.B. Barratt's ministry in Norway he went to see. Of these few days he says "I stood with Evan Roberts in Tonypandy, but have

never witnessed such scenes as those in Norway." He pleaded with Barratt to come preach in Sunderland which he did, only small numbers gathered and only about 20-30 people were baptised in the Holy Ghost and spoke in tongues. Yet this would be the beginning of a great force in the land. To this very day on the wall of the church are engraved the words "September 1907. When the fire of the Lord fell it burnt up all the debt." (At this point he was fifty three years old).

The year after in 1908 he published his magazine 'Confidence' which was the very first Pentecostal paper of its kind. It ran straight through to 1926, 141 issues in all and carried teaching, testimonies and announcements of events. At its peak it was being sent throughout the UK, America, New Zealand, S.Africa, Liberia and India. In its first copy he called for a Whitsuntide conference which would be an annual event until 1914 when the war began. Myerscough and Wigglesworth both received the Holy Ghost at these conferences, in attendance over these few years were men like John and Howard Carter, George Jeffreys, Cecil Polhill and Stanley Frodsham (later to be a leader in the American AG and editor of the Evangel) to mention a few. There were never great numbers at these gatherings compared to today's conferences, yet they deeply affected the future leaders of a movement. From here also the PMU was organised in 1909.

For these early years Boddy was looked to as the main leader and was able to preserve unity until the other men got established in their various roles. He played a vital role in protecting this work from an onslaught of opposition, slander and accusation. After the 1stWW he did not hold the same place of influence as he previously had. No doubt his Anglican stance (especially infant baptism) and his stand against pacifism by Pentecostals during the war would of course have caused the new young leaders to move on without him. With the coming of age and because of his wife's failing health he resigned from his church in Sunderland in 1922 and moved to a small pastorate in Durham. His continued input was felt by his publishing of 'Confidence' straight through to 1926. Like John Wesley he refused to leave the Anglican Church and had no desire to start a new denomination. He died in 1930 at the age of seventy six.

His heart of brotherly love, fatherly care and friendly devotion is an outstanding example of a godly leader in a great revival movement. Leaders do not have to dominate, abuse, dictate or manipulate to stand at the fore of leadership.

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