

# Robert A. Brown

by Keith Malcomson

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*Robert A. Brown was a passionate pastor and evangelist whose ministry significantly impacted the church and missions in America and beyond.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:15, Acts 20:24, 1 Corinthians 9:16, 2 Timothy 4:5

**Topics:** "Evangelism", "Spiritual Conversion"

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## Description

Keith Malcomson shares the inspiring story of Robert Alexander Brown, a man born in Northern Ireland who went from a life of worldly pleasures to a passionate preacher and missionary. Brown's journey of conversion, baptism in the Holy Ghost, and ministry in New York exemplifies his fierce dedication to preaching against sin and leading souls to Christ. His partnership with Marie Burgees, a healed TB survivor with a calling to missions, resulted in a powerful soul-winning team that impacted many lives. Brown's legacy of fervent evangelism, financial support for missions, and unwavering commitment to souls continues to inspire believers today.

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## Transcript

Robert Alexander Brown was born in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland he had a godly mother of Methodist stock who left her mark on him from an early age. As a young man he set off for a life in London where he joined the police force and where he enjoyed popularity, drink and the things of the world. While back visiting his home in Enniskillen he attended meetings held by his cousin George Reid, it was in these meetings that he was mightily converted. It was not long until a real fire and passion for souls burnt in his heart. There was little opportunity within the local churches to give vent to this fire but he along with friends would meet from home to home and in the open air to preach and testify. In 1898 along with two of these friends they set off for America. While on the boat he would witness to any and all when opportunity arose. After arriving in New York on a Friday he was found in the open-air preaching on the Sunday. This was to be the beginning of a long ministry in this great city. He had a burning desire to serve God as a preacher and so initially he worked during the day in the New York police department and at night studied for the ministry. Later he went on to work as a civil engineer while continuing his studies. Eventually he was ordained in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

In 1907 some initial signs of Pentecost came to New York, first to some in A.B. Simpson's training school and then in a Holiness Mission where three received the Holy Ghost and spoke in tongues. After being put out of this holiness mission they met from home to home holding tarrying meetings. There was a great

spirit of prayer among them as they continued to look for an outpouring of the Spirit. In May of that year as a result of these meetings two young ladies opened Glad Tidings Hall. In June 1908 Robert with two friends, one of which was overseeing a mission in the Bronx attended their first Pentecostal meetings. Robert believed he already had received the Holy Ghost and didn't like to hear anything different to his set opinions. Initially he resisted but soon came to see his need of the Baptism in the Holy Ghost. For three months he sought God in prayer and fasting for the Baptism. This was a terrible time of conflict against discouragement and accusation but he prevailed in prayer, overcame and received his Baptism in the Holy Ghost when he spoke forth in tongues.

It was not long before Robert felt Marie Burgees who had been one of those young ladies who started the mission was to be his life's partner. Five of her family had died of TB and when just a teenager she also was dieing but through prayer God healed her at the age of nineteen. At the same time she had a vision of Jesus asking her "Will you forsake all and follow Me?" Marie cried out from her heart "Yes, Lord, all." For two years she was trained at the Moody Bible Institute and longed to go as a missionary having no thought of responding to Robert's proposals, but God spoke to her and so in 1909 they were married. They were to become a great soul winning team who laboured faithfully in unity together.

In 1914 he made a visit to England and ministered at the Whitsuntide convention in Sunderland alongside other great pioneers. After that from July through August he visited his beloved homeland and ministered at the Full Gospel Tent convention held in Bangor by the young George Jeffreys. During the convention at Bangor he rescued some believers from drowning. How glad he must have been to see Pentecost coming to his homeland. While there the 1st World War broke out causing a swift return to the States. Pastor Brown was a man of about six feet tall, red hair, thin but with a powerful composure. Lester Sumrall said of his ministry that he "was a fierce man in the pulpit, as he preached against ungodliness, wickedness in high places and sin of all kinds. In his Christian work there was no playing around. He was a warrior, but also a peacemaker."

His church in America became a great stop off point for travelling preachers and missionaries from Britain, Europe and elsewhere in the world. For 15 years he worked as an engineer as well as faithfully and effectually pastoring. Under such fiery and evangelistic leadership the church grew rapidly. Since the days of being in the small original Hall four moves had to be made to accommodate the people joining them. In the 1921 they took a great step of faith and purchased a very large old Baptist church which they called Glad Tidings Tabernacle. They promised God that if He helped them pay it off they would make it a "soul saving missionary church." It took just four years to pay off the large mortgage and to be free financially. After that their finances were poured into foreign missions. The church was always equally mixed between black and white he made no difference between people. His altar calls were always direct and powerful, he never missed an opportunity to call sinners to repentance and his altar call's always marked the minds of visiting preachers. He was quite happy for other's to minister to those seeking healing or the baptism, his consuming priority was souls. After most meetings in the church the prayer room downstairs always had believers in it seeking the Baptism or praying for God to move in power. This prayer room was always open. The church supported large evangelistic rallies in the city and further a field and had their own weekly radio broadcast. In 1930 Robert and Marie were invited to come to the great Kingsway Whitsuntide Convention in London. Donald Gee noted his "deep evangelistic passion" and his "earnest appeals to saints to be faithful and sinners to repent." Their annual conventions in New York ran on a continual basis from about 1908 straight through to the end of their days. Preachers such as Donald Gee, Smith Wigglesworth and many others would minister at these.

God abundantly answered their hearts desire in making it a missionary church both in giving financially and giving labourers to go to other nations. The two years proceeding his death it was recorded that more finance poured into this one church for world missions than any other of the 5 thousand Assemblies of God churches, it was also the biggest of all these churches. They set an example to the whole movement. Also over these years the church supported more than 50 missionaries on different fields. After more than 40 years as Pastor he died suddenly in his own home in February of 1948. Marie reluctantly but ably carried on the work maintaining the numbers at over 500 till she died in 1971 at the age of 90.

Robert A. Brown was a true Pastor who constantly done the work of an evangelist.

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