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Holy Jumpers: Evangelicals and Radicals in Progressive Era America (Religion in America)

William Kostlevy

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In this groundbreaking book, William Kostlevy presents a fascinating study of the Metropolitan Church Association (MCA), a religious community founded in Chicago in the early 1890s. The MCA was one of the most controversial societies of the era. Its members were called "jumpers" because of their acrobatic worship style, and "Burning Bushers" after their caustic periodical, the *Burning Bush*. They objected to the concept of private property, rejected "elite" denominations, and professed an alternative, radical vision of Christianity, using modern music and folk art to spread their message.

A product of the holiness revival of the late nineteenth century and a catalyst for Pentecostalism, the MCA played a vital role in the twentieth century growth of evangelical Christianity, yet it has long been ignored in studies of American radicalism, of communal societies, and even of holiness and Pentecostal Christianity. Kostlevy rectifies this omission, providing a valuable new context for understanding the origins of Pentecostalism. He investigates the internal struggles of the Holiness Movement, showing how radically divergent theological currents came to dominate a major segment of the American evangelical community. He also shows how deeply the MCA impacted the lives of twentieth century evangelists Bud Robinson and Seth C. Rees, self-designated first woman bishop Alma White, and Pentecostal evangelists A. G. Garr and Glenn Cook. As *Holy Jumpers* demonstrates, Holiness Christians, and the MCA in particular, played a profoundly formative role in the development of modern evangelical and Pentecostal Christianity.

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