

***Bosworth Matters***

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## **Bosworth Blamed Charles Parham**

**He Criticized Him for His 'Wrong and Unscriptural'  
Teachings on Speaking in Tongues**

**By Roscoe Barnes III, Ph.D.**

Author, *F.F. Bosworth: The Man Behind 'Christ the Healer'*

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**Charles F. Parham**  
(1873-1929)

When F.F. Bosworth resigned from the Assemblies of God on July 24, 1918 over the issue of evidential tongues, he did not go quietly into the night. Instead, he wrote a blistering "Open

Letter" in which he accused Pentecostals of being misguided in some of their beliefs and interpretations of the Bible.

Bosworth adamantly opposed the view that the "speaking in tongues" in Acts was separate and distinct from the gift of tongues in First Corinthians. Bosworth also disagreed with the view that "speaking in tongues" was the initial evidence of Spirit baptism for all believers. Bosworth described both views as "doctrinal error," and he laid the responsibility for that "error" at the feet of Charles F. Parham. Insisting there was no biblical support for the Pentecostal views, Bosworth wrote:

**Charles F. Parham, who came forward with this doctrine in the year 1900, is the first man in the history of the world to publicly teach it. He saw that it was not possible to teach that speaking in tongues will in every case accompany the Baptism in the Spirit, unless he could make it appear that the speaking in tongues on the day of Pentecost was something separate and distinct from the gift of tongues at Corinth. He is also the first man in the history of the world to teach that none have ever been baptized in the Spirit except those who have spoken in tongues.**

To strengthen his point, Bosworth made a comparison of Parham with respected soul-winners in the past:

**The facts are that hundreds of the greatest soul-winners of the whole Christian era, without the gift of tongues, have had a much greater endowment of power and have been used to accomplish a much greater and deeper work than Mr. Parham.**

Before his resignation, Bosworth served as a founding minister of the AG. He also founded the First Assembly of God Church in Dallas, Texas. But unlike many Pentecostal leaders, he believed that people could be baptized in the Spirit without speaking in tongues. In his view, prophecy or any of the other spiritual gifts could be evidence of Spirit baptism.

Bosworth had his own Pentecostal experience in October 1906 following a visit by Parham to Zion City, Ill. Bosworth spoke in tongues at that time and he continued to speak in tongues on a regular basis. "Let it not be supposed that I am depreciating God's glorious gift of tongues because I do not believe that this one manifestation always accompanies the baptism in the Spirit," he shared in his letter. "God graciously gave me this gift many years ago and nearly every day in prayer and worship I still speak in tongues, and it is one of the sweetest things in my Christian experience."

Bosworth used his letter to refute some of the core teachings of the AG and other Pentecostals on Spirit baptism and speaking in tongues. He published his letter with the title, **"Do All Speak With Tongues? — An Open Letter to the Ministers and Saints of the Pentecostal Movement."** The letter, which was widely read, appeared in the 1920s as a chapter in Bosworth's biography, *Joybringer Bosworth*, and as an article on the pages of *Word and Witness*. It also appeared as a booklet published by The Christian Alliance Publishing Company. John J. Scruby published it in the 1930s. Historians point to Bosworth's resignation and the publication of his "Open Letter" as important moments in Pentecostal church history.

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**Note:** My book, *F.F. Bosworth: The Man Behind Christ the Healer*, can be purchased here

(<https://www.cambridgescholars.com/ff-bosworth-16>) with a 25% discount. Use the discount code: bosworth25.

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