

Bosworth Matters

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F.F. Bosworth

An Overview of His Life and Ministry

(Preprint)

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

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F.F. Bosworth
(1877-1958)

Note: This article, a preprint, has been submitted and accepted for publication in Brill's *Encyclopedia of Global Pentecostalism*.

Fred Francis ("F.F.") Bosworth (1877-1958) was a Pentecostal pioneer, musician, and famous healing evangelist whose ministry spanned several decades, beginning in the early years of the 20th century. He played a prominent role in the Pentecostal movement in the United States in the early 1900s; he also worked with the healing evangelists of the Voice of Healing during the post-World War II revival.

Bosworth was a founding minister and one of the first executive presbyters of the General Council of the Assemblies of God. In the 1920s and 1930s, he held citywide revival meetings that drew thousands of people in single services throughout the United States and Canada. It is believed that more than a million people came to Christ through his ministry. In addition to being a pioneer in radio broadcasting, he was the author of the widely-read book, *Christ the Healer* (1924). He was considered by some historians to be one of the most successful healing revivalists of his generation.

Bosworth was born on January 17, 1877, to Burton and Amelia Bosworth on a farm near Utica, Neb. As a child, Bosworth discovered his talent for music, and he learned to sell. He was a teenager when he became a Christian. While still a youth, Bosworth contracted Tuberculosis. Believing he would soon die, he travelled to Fitzgerald, Ga., to say farewell to his family. While there, he attended a service in a Methodist church that was held by Evangelist Mattie Perry. She prayed for him and he was healed of his TB.

Later, after learning about the healing ministry of John Alexander Dowie, Bosworth and his wife, Estella Hyde, moved north to live in Zion City, which was founded by Dowie as a Christian community. Dowie hired Bosworth to be his band director.

In 1906, Pentecostal pioneer Charles Parham visited Zion and shared the Pentecostal message. On October 18 of that year, Bosworth received the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. It was during that time that he received his call to preach. He and his family later moved to Dallas, Texas, where they established a church that would become known as the First Assembly of God Church.

Bosworth suffered hardships in Dallas. On one occasion a white mob held him at gun-point and brutally beat him because of his ministry at a black camp meeting.

In 1912, Evangelist Maria Woodworth-Etter came to his church for a six-month revival meeting. During that time, Bosworth unleashed a flurry of press reports about conversions, miracles of healing and unusual events that occurred during her ministry. The news of the meetings attracted some of the biggest names in the Pentecostal movement. For several years, the meetings continued to grow. However, a conflict arose over the issue of speaking in tongues. While many in his assembly believed speaking in tongues was the initial sign of Spirit baptism, Bosworth believed speaking in tongues was only one of the signs of Spirit baptism. He also opposed the view that the tongues spoken in Acts were separate and distinct from the gift of tongues in First Corinthians. Because of his disagreement, Bosworth resigned from the Assemblies of God denomination and became an active minister in the Christian & Missionary Alliance.

A few months following his resignation, Bosworth said farewell to his wife, Estella, who succumb to TB. In spite of his grief, he continued to pray for the sick and preach divine healing. In 1920, he held successful healing campaigns in Lima, Ohio, and Pittsburg, Pa.

In the 1920s, Bosworth's ministry saw unprecedented growth. His biography, *Joybringer Bosworth*, appeared in 1921, and his book, *Christ the Healer*, in 1924. His 1924 campaign in Ottawa, Canada reportedly drew a massive crowd in which 12,000 sought salvation. This was also the decade in which he married Florence Naomi Valentine and launched his magazine, *Exploits of Faith*.

In the 1930s, Bosworth embraced the teachings of British Israelism and fell out of fellowship with his denomination, the Christian & Missionary Alliance. However, in the 1940s, he recanted his views and was welcomed back into fellowship.

Bosworth had all but retired when he learned of the healing ministry of William Branham, which was managed by Gordon Lindsay. After attending one of their meetings, Bosworth joined their staff. Although 71 years of age, he taught and served as an advisor to Branham and other healing revivalists who were members of The Voice of Healing organization.

Bosworth spent his final years of ministry as a missionary evangelist. He ministered in South Africa, Germany, and Japan, among other places. On January 23, 1958, he died of a heart attack in his home in Miami, Fla. He was 81. His brother, B.B. Bosworth, died on Feb. 17, in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Further reading:

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King, Paul L. 2006. *Genuine Gold: The Cautiously Charismatic Story of the Early Christian and Missionary Alliance.* Tulsa, OK: Word & Spirit Press.

Perkins, Eunice M. 1921. *Joybringer Bosworth: His Life Story.* Detroit, MI: John J. Scruby.

Reminder: "F.F. Bosworth History" is now on Twitter. Follow [@bosworth_fred](#)

Note: My book, *F.F. Bosworth: The Man Behind "Christ the Healer,"* can be purchased [here](#) with a 25% discount. Use the discount code: **bosworth25**.

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