

I am happy to endorse and recommend *God's Generals: The Healing Evangelists*. Information relating to these men and women of the past is something that can be inspirational, challenging, and informative to those of us in this generation.

—*John Partington*
National Leader, Assemblies of God, Great Britain

In this latest sequel to the God's Generals series, Roberts Liardon has done it again. This meticulously researched book is a page-turner, bursting with life-changing testimonies. It will take you to spiritual places you have never been before. You will be blessed as you read, and your faith will be catapulted to newer and greater dimensions. I have great respect for the person and the ministry of Roberts Liardon, a best-selling author, wise teacher of scriptural truths, and an anointed spiritual leader with a passion to equip Christian ministers worldwide.

—*Rev. Teresa Wairimu Kinyanjui*
Founder and Director, Faith Evangelical Ministry International

Roberts Liardon is one of the great historians of those who have gone before us in Christendom. His latest edition, *God's Generals: The Healing Evangelists*, is especially touching, and more personal for me due to the fact that my parents are featured. I love being able to refer to these books. It is so important to study those who have gone before us in order to learn from their amazing lives.

—*Joan Hunter*
Author, Founder and President of Joan Hunter Ministries

★★★★★
GOD'S
*The Healing
Evangelists*
GENERALS

Roberts LIARDON



WHITAKER
HOUSE

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GOD’S GENERALS: THE HEALING EVANGELISTS

ISBN: 978-1-60374-268-9

Printed in the United States of America

© 2011 by Roberts Liardon

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Whitaker House
1030 Hunt Valley Circle
New Kensington, PA 15068
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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Liardon, Roberts.

God’s generals : the healing evangelists / Roberts Liardon.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

Summary: “Roberts Liardon recounts the lives and ministries of the great healing evangelists of the twentieth century, including Oral Roberts, Lester Sumrall, Charles and Frances Hunter, F. F. Bosworth, and George Jeffreys”—Provided by publisher.

ISBN 978-1-60374-268-9 (hard : alk. paper) 1. Evangelists—Biography. 2. Healers—Biography. 3. Pentecostals—Biography. I. Title.

BV3780.L458 2011

234'.1310922—dc22

[B]

2011000699

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DEDICATION



I dedicate this book to the passionate lives of Robert and Millicent Spilman, pioneering leaders of the charismatic movement in England. I liken their ministry to Priscilla and Aquilla in the New Testament, who helped people find the more perfect way. (See Acts 18:26.)

Robert (Bob) was born in Watford, England, in 1924, and joined the Royal Navy due to the demands of the Second World War. After the war, Bob, a qualified mechanical and civil engineer, took a position with the Ministry of Works overseeing the building of new roads in Nigeria. It was there that he met Millicent.

As a teenager, Millicent had accepted Jesus as her Lord and Savior at her local church in Chadderton, England. In 1948, as a fully qualified nurse trained in tropical diseases and midwifery, Millicent desired to go to Africa as a missionary but was told that she would have to first attend a Bible college for four years. Impatient to get to work, she applied and was appointed to the position of Nursing Sister in a Leprosy Mission Settlement Hospital near Enugu, Nigeria, where she met Bob. The two were married in 1953 at the Ridge Church in Accra, Ghana.

It was through Millicent's steadfast witness to the love of God in her life that Bob came to know Jesus as his Lord and Savior. Returning to the United Kingdom, Bob and Millicent settled into family life with their three children as Bob's career soared. Soon thereafter, Bob and Millicent

experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which influenced Bob to leave his secure future in Industry and step out in faith by following the Lord's leading.

Bob became best known for his work with the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International. In 1975, the Cheshire Chapter of FGBMFI was formed in his living room. From there, the movement grew to more than four hundred chapters throughout the UK and Ireland. Bob was appointed as the group's International Director but always insisted that he could not have done this work without Millicent's love and support.

Bob and Millicent frequently visited many countries with oppressive regimes, including trips behind the Iron Curtain, always taking the gospel in word and print, encouraging those who loved the Lord and introducing many more to Him. Together, they impacted thousands of lives without ever seeking to promote themselves.

A soft-spoken but well-read man, Bob saw the need for Spirit-filled books. He established a business, Faith Builders, and became the first to import these books into the UK and Europe. Today, there are thousands of believers living Spirit-filled lives due to their influence and his ministry.

Bob went on to heaven in January 1999. He was survived by his wife, Millicent, their three children, and their five grandchildren, all of whom are fully committed to the Lord and following God's plan for their lives.

A true gentleman has gone ahead, one who is greatly missed.

Thank you for the example you both lived as a Christian couple. Thank you for walking through difficult times and not giving up. We are better because you were faithful to God's calling on your lives.

—Roberts Liardon
London, England
January 2011

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FOREWORD



I was not prepared for how much I would learn, be blessed, and receive encouragement from reading Roberts Liardon's *God's Generals: The Healing Evangelists*. I have no doubt that you will, too. The title of *God's Generals* is an apt one for the particular people Roberts has chosen to describe. Although these "generals" are largely from the Pentecostal and charismatic sector of the Christian church, they have impacted countless millions of people from every theological and ecclesiastical position. Although I myself was brought up in a different tradition, I have been blessed profoundly by men like those described in this volume. Oral Roberts actually wrote forewords for two of my own books, and he graciously entertained my wife, Louise, and me in his home a few years before he went to heaven.

Some readers may not know that Roberts Liardon was actually named after Oral Roberts, one of the generals of this book. Roberts Liardon's parents were charter members of Oral Roberts University. He was the first male child to come from that charter class! Oral himself wanted to help name the baby and they all came up with the name Kenneth Roberts Liardon.

Roberts is the principal of the International Bible Institute of London. This institute is part of the ministry of Kensington Temple, of which my close friend Colin Dye is the Senior Pastor.

Mr. Liardon has done a remarkable job in his research. He has uncovered details that have been remained hidden until now. What is more impressive is that he has not glossed over facts that don't always show his



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subjects in a good light. He gives praise when it is due but reminds all of us that even the best of men are men at best.

What encouraged me most about reading this book is the undoubted presence of the miraculous that marked the lives of these unusual men. I have longed to see miracles in my own ministry. I have seen some, but not many. Indeed, some of these men knew the disappointment of not seeing everyone healed. In the end, God is sovereign. He said to Moses, *"I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion"* (Exodus 33:19). This dimension of Christian theology is sometimes missing with some of these stalwarts and, just maybe, could have helped them to have a more balanced perspective in their ministries.

A healing presence is something none of us can "work up." When it is present, as in Luke 5:17, people are healed. When such an anointing lifts, there are those who carry on as if nothing happened. In any case, a genuine healing presence often accompanied the ministries of the generals portrayed in this book. It was thrilling for me to read of them – just to know what God is able and willing to do. I would hope that this book would drive us to our knees and lead us to plead with God to show mercy. When we ask for mercy as in Hebrews 4:16, we have nothing to give in exchange, so, when God grants it, He alone gets all the glory. Perhaps that is one of the reasons God sometimes withholds mercy; it keeps us from claiming too much credit for ourselves.

I highly recommend this book. It is a reminder that God has raised up men in previous times and we must ask him to do it again – not with a few but with many – in such a time as this.

—R. T. Kendall

Minister at Westminster Chapel (1977–2002), London, England



CHAPTER ONE

F. F. BOSWORTH



“Healing Pioneer”

“HEALING PIONEER”



On a cold winter morning in 1925 in a schoolyard in Scranton, Pennsylvania, a group of rosy-cheeked children laughed gleefully as they chased each other around the tall oak tree. Little girls giggled on the swing set as they swung higher and higher.

Suddenly, one little girl fell to the ground, crying as she clutched at her chest. Apparently, she had injured herself, but even as she wiped her tears, the adults who were supervising were not concerned. Nine-year-old Raffaella Serio continued to have pain near the “invisible” injury on her chest. Her parents were concerned, so they took her to see one doctor and then another. It appeared she had just bruised the area near her left breast, but as the pain increased, a small lump formed and then grew to the size of an orange.

Raffaella’s parents called on a friend who was a pediatric specialist trained at Johns Hopkins University. After administering several difficult tests, the doctor gravely pronounced the diagnosis. Little Raffaella Serio had sarcoma cancer of the left breast.

The grieving parents watched as their precious daughter lost weight rapidly. The specialist determined that the cancer was rooted too deeply



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for surgery and said he could do little for the pain. There was also an open, seeping sore, but since not much was known about cancer at the time, the doctor prescribed a special brown salve to be applied on the affected area each day, which would then be wrapped with clean bandages. Although they tried to be hopeful, Raffaella's doctors saw slim chance for a recovery.

After months of ineffective treatment and worry, the Serios invited Raffaella's doctor to join them for dinner one Sunday afternoon. As they quietly conversed around the table, the doctor looked with mournful eyes at the sick little girl he had been unable to help. Turning to her mother, he made an unusual statement for a physician: "There is a man holding some kind of special meetings in a large tent in Scranton. He prays, and people get well."

"Doctor, really, you must be kidding!" the Serios responded.

"No, I'm not joking. I mean it. I had a patient with a very large goiter who has been healed. She said Evangelist F. F. Bosworth prayed for her, and she was instantly healed." Mrs. Serio looked at the doctor in amazement, and he continued, "Why don't you take dear little Raffaella down there? They may be able to help her also."¹

The Serios drove to Scranton that very evening to hear F. F. Bosworth preach a sermon on Christ's salvation and divine healing. They purchased a copy of Bosworth's book *Christ the Healer*, which would become a Christian classic on the power of Christ to heal. For the next week, the Serios read large portions of the book aloud to Raffaella so that all three of them could understand the biblical promise of healing in Christ.

With their faith greatly increased, the family drove back to the crusade the following Sunday. During the time of prayer for healing, F. F. Bosworth stepped toward the little girl standing on the platform and prayed a beautiful prayer for God's healing power. He prayed that God would heal her and use her as a living monument for His praise and glory.²

When they returned home later that night, Mrs. Serio got the salve ready for Raffaella's daily treatment. Raffaella looked at her mother in astonishment. "Why, mother dear, where is your faith? Didn't you hear

F. F. BOSWORTH

the man say that Jesus healed me? I don't need any more bandages. I am healed." Neither the large lump nor the swelling from beneath her arm to her collarbone had gone away, but the little girl had begun to see herself through the eyes of faith.

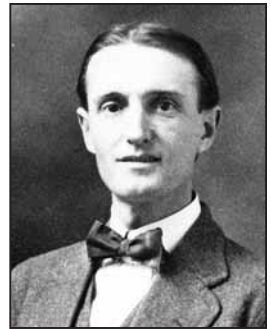
There was little sleep for Mrs. Serio that night as she tossed and turned, worrying about her sweet girl. But the next day, as she later recounted, "morning dawned and with it came a newness of life for our darling! She had stepped out into the faith life with Jesus and He had met her. Oh! the joy and glory of it!"³ The morning sunlight revealed that all the swelling from the collarbone and under the arm was gone! Five days later, the lump was the size of a hickory nut; shortly after that, it disappeared completely!

"Praise our wonderful, precious Jesus" was the joyous mother's cry that summer of 1925 in the city of Scranton, Pennsylvania.⁴ Her little girl had been miraculously healed because a man of God had been faithful to preach complete salvation in the atonement of Christ—salvation for the mind, body, and spirit. And God had been faithful to perform His Word.

An Early Pentecostal General

F. F. Bosworth was a frontier evangelist, a pioneer Christian radio broadcaster, one of the most successful healing evangelists of the 1920s, and a man who created a bridge to the healing revivalists of the 1940s and 1950s. From his visit to Azusa Street and on, Fred Bosworth was a cornerstone of the modern Pentecostal movement.

In his early revivals, Bosworth came in contact with other Pentecostal leaders, such as John Alexander Dowie, Maria Woodworth-Etter, Charles F. Parham, John G. Lake, Paul Rader, and E. W. Kenyon. Years later, in the 1950s, with his vast knowledge of the Scriptures and his broad experience as a healing evangelist, he became a mentor for men like Jack Coe, a young Oral Roberts, Ern Baxter, and many in James Gordon Lindsay's "Voice of Healing" group. He built an especially close mentoring relationship with William Branham and T. L.



F. F. Bosworth

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Osborne. Baxter traveled with these men to South Africa and may have attended the Branham-Bosworth meetings in the States, as well.

F. F. Bosworth was a man of great integrity and honor. He was not overcome with emotionalism in the healing ministry but steadily looked to God to fulfill His Word. Because of this, he never wanted people to claim healings due to emotional responses. Bosworth faithfully recorded the names and addresses of those who were healed through his ministry. To him, they were the “witnesses,” living proof that God’s Spirit was at work among His people to heal. Bosworth welcomed doctors’ confirmations of the healings, as well.

As a result, during his years in ministry, Bosworth accumulated over 250,000 letters and testimonies from people who had been touched by his messages. A number of those testimonies will be shared in these pages as we look at one of God’s true generals, who led some astounding healing revivals in the early twentieth century. Yet Bosworth always stated that his primary focus was evangelism, then healing.

A Frontier Boy

When the Civil War finally ended after four long years, the United States was a wounded nation. The U.S. government decided to create a new national vision of change and expansion to encourage its citizens to look beyond the years of war to a future of hope and promise. People were enticed to move West and settle new territories. With the Homestead Act of 1862, which supplied homesteaders with affordable federal land, and with the expansion of the railroad, families were moving by the thousands to the Midwest.

Burton Bosworth had served in the war as a Union soldier, and he and his wife, Amelia, headed out to Nebraska, where they could buy land for a cheap rate. They bought a small farm in Utica, Nebraska, and began a family.

On a frigid winter day, January 17, 1877, Amelia Bosworth gave birth to her second son, Fred Francis. The Bosworths were grateful to have another son to help build their farm. It would have brought them greater joy if they had known that this son would also touch more than one million people with the love and power of Jesus Christ.

F. F. BOSWORTH

Fred was a boy with steadfast determination. He was a hard worker who set some lofty goals, and he ultimately reached them. When he was only nine years old, Fred accompanied his father to a Civil War reunion at Fort Kearney, Nebraska, to enjoy the brass band and military ceremonies. A lover of music from his earliest days, Fred was mesmerized by the music flowing from the decorated stage. As the crowd cheered and sang patriotic songs, Fred inched forward to watch the cornet players. Fascinated by the instrument, Fred was determined to possess his own cornet and to learn how to play it. He had a yearning for music deep within his soul.

Being a farmer's son, Fred was adept at using the resources around him. For example, when his uncle gave him the runt of a pig litter to have as his own, he fattened up the pig and sold it at the local market. With that money, the industrious boy bought a cow, raised her, fattened her up, and traded her and her calf for a brand-new cornet. Now that he had his coveted instrument, he needed money for lessons. Undaunted, Fred pored over the old organ's elementary instruction book in their farmhouse parlor, and that is how he learned to read music and play notes.

Fred purchased the most advanced cornet music book he could find. While working in his father's feed store, he would practice for hours when business was slow. He studied the notes, learned the musical values, and practiced diligently. Early in his life, he showed the perseverance that would take him through difficult times and even persecution in years to come.

Soon, Fred was skilled enough as a musician to play in a community band. When his family moved to University Place, Nebraska, he auditioned and won a seat in the Nebraska State Band. One day, this young man's fine musical talent would even grace the stage in New York City.

By the age of sixteen, Fred Bosworth was itching to be out on his own. In addition to his natural aptitude for music, he was a natural salesman. He met a "general agent" who wanted him to sell a variety of products, including cement for building industries. Fred and his older brother "rode the rails" around the State of Nebraska, often jumping open train cars to ride for free, as they tried to make their fortune as traveling salesmen. On one of these adventures, Fred's life was changed forever.

Changed Forever!

Many of young Fred's sales trips took him to Omaha. On one trip, he stopped to visit Miss Maude Greene, who was several years older than he. She'd invited him to join her at an old-time revival at the First Methodist Church that week. The first two nights, he listened politely to the gospel singing and the preaching, then escorted Miss Maude home and returned to his hotel. On the third night, however, the Holy Spirit began to tug on his heart.

For the first time, Fred really *heard* the message of salvation and understood the sacrifice Jesus had made for him on the cross nineteen hundred years earlier. His heart was stirred within him. Sensing that something was happening, Maude encouraged Fred to take a trip down to the altar when the preacher called.

**With the
presence of God
flowing through
him, Fred
decided to say
yes to God.**

Reluctantly at first, but then with a firmer step, Fred Bosworth approached that little Methodist altar. While he knelt there, he knew that he must decide that very night if he was going to make a decision for Christ or walk away from Him.

With the presence of God flowing through him, Fred decided to say yes to God. Immediately, his heart was filled with joy to overflowing, and he erupted in holy laughter. "Such a happiness filled his heart he laughed for joy, till he actually felt embarrassed because he could scarcely stop."⁵ Now, Fred had another decision to make. Much of his sales success had been based on dishonest methods and half-truths. He needed to quit his salesman's life and go home. But what would he do with his life in Christ now?

For the next two years, Bosworth held so many different jobs, it was hard to keep count. He worked in a windmill factory, then as a clerk in a grocery store. Following that, he was a department store clerk, a meat market butcher, a railroad maintenance worker, and a house painter. He learned more about his relationship with the Lord during this time, but he also struggled with an anxious soul.

F. F. BOSWORTH

A Female Healing Evangelist

Fred's career was not his only struggle. His health was deteriorating rapidly. Eight years earlier, when the Bosworths lived in University Place, a young boy had been hurt, and the local doctor needed to perform surgery. There was not enough adult help available, so young Fred helped the doctor during the surgery. The operating room was kept very warm, and when Fred left, he walked out into an icy-cold Nebraska night. As a result, he developed a severe cough that weakened his lungs and resulted in a chronic lung condition that manifested as a dry, raspy cough.

Now, at the age of nineteen, his cough had worsened, and it had become painful to breathe. After spending several weeks in bed, Fred was finally diagnosed with tuberculosis—the “killer disease” of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. And the doctor's verdict was hopeless. He predicted that Fred had little time left to live.⁶

What should he do now? His parents had moved to Fitzgerald, Georgia, for a fresh start one year earlier. Facing death at nineteen, Fred Bosworth decided to take a train trip to Georgia to see his parents one last time. He was seriously ill during the long, agonizing train ride and wondered if he would make it there alive. When he finally reached Fitzgerald, Fred stumbled off the train and into his mother's loving arms. She nursed him over the course of several weeks, until he was finally able to get out of the house for short periods of time.

On his first outing, Fred went to another Methodist revival so that he could be encouraged by the Word of God. Miss Mattie Perry, a healing evangelist, was teaching a series on developing a deeper walk with God. Fred coughed throughout the service, and she looked his way intently several times. At the end of the sermon, Fred went forward to pray for more of God in his life.

Miss Mattie walked directly over to Fred, looked him in the eyes, and told him that God still had work for him to do, and that he was too young to die. With that, Miss Mattie laid hands on Fred and prayed for him to be delivered completely from tuberculosis. From that very moment, Fred began to heal, and within days, his cough was gone completely. A doctor's visit confirmed that his lungs were totally restored. Fred Bosworth rejoiced in his healing, but he had little idea at the time

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that he had been healed to bring forth the truth of God's gospel message to thousands of people, believers and nonbelievers alike.

“God, I Still Need a Plan”

Fred's health returned quickly. He didn't know how he was to serve God, so he settled in Georgia with his family and found work, first as the assistant postmaster in Fitzgerald. Next, he was elected town clerk. After a time, he moved on to work as a banker. When Fred was twenty-three, he met and married a young lady named Estella Hayde. He had led her to the Lord shortly after they'd met, and she was also dedicated to finding a way to serve Jesus.



The Bosworth Musical Trio

Fred and his wife attended church faithfully, but a subtle anxiousness continued to plague his soul. To ease his unrest, Fred returned to music and played the cornet that he loved, which was possible because of the renewed strength in his lungs. Soon, he was playing and directing the Georgia Empire State Band, performing at weekend community events throughout the State of Georgia, and waiting for God to show him the next step.

God is faithful to His Word. He had a plan for F. F. Bosworth, whose life was about to make a sudden turn in God's direction. In God's providence, Fred and Estella had been given a copy of the magazine *Leaves of Healing*. Written by Scottish evangelist John Alexander Dowie, it proclaimed the healing power of Jesus Christ at work on the earth today. It also described a Christian community that Dowie had established in Zion City, Illinois.

Fred and Estella discussed the new city with great excitement. Fred already knew from personal experience that Jesus Christ still healed. Now, he was eager for the opportunity to learn from someone who believed the same thing and to serve the Lord in this new city. As soon as the young couple arrived in Zion City, Fred found a job as a bookkeeper in a local store. At each community church service, he played his cornet joyfully to the Lord.

F. F. BOSWORTH

The Zion City Band was not very accomplished. John Alexander Dowie quickly recognized the scope of Fred Bosworth's musical talent, and when he asked Fred if he would take on the paid position of band director, Fred jumped at the chance. In the past, Fred had played with secular bands, and he thrilled at being able to play the music he dearly loved while lifting up the name of Jesus.

According to one of Bosworth's early biographers, "The Zion City Band rapidly changed from a discordant, amateur musical group to one of the largest and finest musical organizations in the entire United States."⁷ Fred's reputation as a musician spread just as quickly. Within months, the forty-seven-member band received a great deal of recognition as a result of playing at Dowie's outreach services, even performing at Madison Square Garden in New York City!

Bosworth was to direct twenty consecutive concerts, two per day for ten days. In New York, critics initially viewed the Midwestern Christian band with cynicism and predicted cultural disaster, but they were unprepared for Bosworth's musical talent and his dedicated service to God. After the first performance, the press offered its praise, saying, "The Concert...was awaited with no little apprehension, but before the players on the stage had swept the first four bars of the first overture, all present knew they were listening to real music produced by masters of the art."⁸ F. F. Bosworth was just twenty-six years old at the time of this musical victory.

The Sweeping Power of the Holy Spirit

Not everything in Zion City was going as well. Beginning in 1903, John Alexander Dowie became increasingly autocratic in his role as the city's leader. He proclaimed himself a prophet, "Elijah the Restorer," and donned the robes of an Old Testament priest. Financial and personal troubles surrounded him.

At the same time, a resident of Zion City named Mrs. Waldron attended a tent crusade under the ministry of Charles F. Parham and received the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of tongues. When she brought the exciting news to Zion City, John Alexander Dowie was determined to keep the "tongues movement" out of his community. However, Bosworth and evangelist John G. Lake, who also lived in Zion City at the time, were

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*F. F. and Estella Bosworth
pose for a family portrait in
Zion with Vivian and Vernon.*

hungry for the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives. When Parham came to Zion City to preach on the baptism in the Holy Spirit a few years later, the Bosworths welcomed him into their home to hold meetings. Shortly after this, Fred Bosworth and Lake received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Together, they made a trip to Azusa Street in California to experience the Holy Spirit's revival there and to seek answers to their questions from the Reverend William J. Seymour concerning this "new" work of God.⁹ After Bosworth received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, he looked back at his early days of nomadic movements from one job to

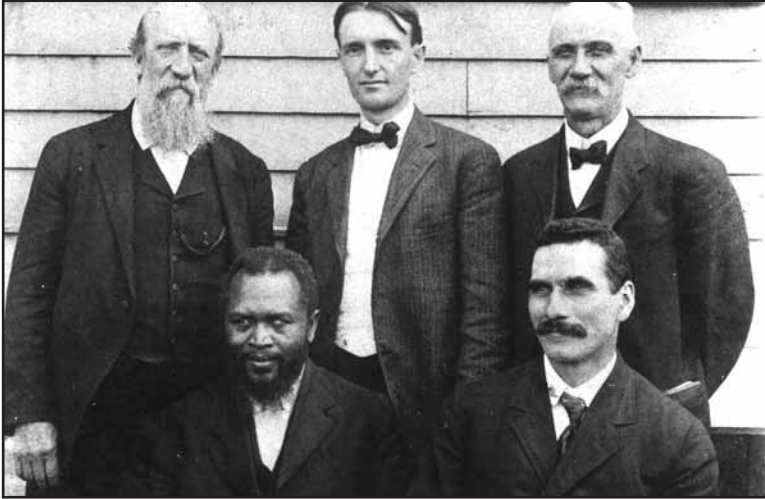
the other and said, "I wish someone at that time had told me about being baptized in the Holy Spirit. I did a great deal of drifting not knowing what the right place was for me."¹⁰

The right place for Fred Bosworth became clear to him almost immediately. During the years that he lived in Zion City, he spoke of his fear that God would call him to preach the gospel. After receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit, however, he became afraid that God would *not* call him to preach. At twenty-nine years of age, his life had been radically changed. He began to search the Scriptures on the Holy Spirit, such as Matthew 3:11, "*I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire,*" and Acts 19:2, "*Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.*" Jesus had promised that the Holy Spirit would come, and that He would be the One to baptize the disciples in the Spirit.

Bosworth also read some of the writings of A. J. Gordon, who spoke out forcefully on the scriptural proof for the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a second and separate experience from salvation. "It is as sinners that we accept Christ; but it is as sons that we accept the Holy Spirit," Gordon wrote as he expounded on the baptism of the Holy Spirit. "We must withhold our consent from the inconsistent exegesis which would make the water baptism of the apostolic times rigidly binding but would relegate the Baptism in the Spirit to a bygone dispensation."¹¹

F. F. BOSWORTH

Bosworth admired the wisdom of using biblical logic and the Word to defend the good news of the full gospel. It would become a hallmark for him in future debates on the healing power of God on the earth in modern days.



*Leaders of the Azusa Street Mission (clockwise from upper left):
Brother Allen, F. F. Bosworth, Tom Hezmalhalch, John G. Lake, and William Seymour*

Committed in the Face of Death

Leaving Zion City, Fred and Estella Bosworth decided they would rely completely on the Lord for His provision. Fred abandoned his secular job and his music once again to preach the gospel wherever they were invited. In the beginning of this new life of faith, the Bosworths had to rely daily on the Lord for their provision. They now had a young daughter, Vivian, and they would pray for each meal to be provided, often up to the last minute. At one point in time, they ate boiled wheat for three meals a day. It sustained them for that period, but afterward, they never had boiled wheat on their table again.

When there was no food left, Fred Bosworth would stick his head into the empty bread box and shout, “Glory!” at the top of his lungs. Then, Estella and little Vivian would do the same. God always provided!

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The little Bosworth family traveled to South Bend, Indiana; Austin and Waco, Texas; Conway, South Carolina; and Fitzgerald, Georgia, before finally settling in Dallas, Texas. The year was 1909, and the Pentecostal movement was gathering momentum throughout the nation as the Holy Spirit moved. In Dallas, Fred began a church affiliated with the Christian and Missionary Alliance. They held tent meetings all over the area, sometimes four meetings in one day, introducing people to the power of God through His Holy Spirit.

**Excited to see
others come to
know the Lord,
Fred was always
open to new
opportunities
to preach.**

Excited to see others come to know the Lord, Fred was always open to new opportunities to preach. One hot summer night in 1909, a friend told him of a camp meeting in Hearne, Texas, some miles outside of Dallas, where the Spirit of God was moving among a black congregation. Racial tensions were high in Texas at the time, so the tent meetings were segregated. The white folks didn't want to approach a "black altar." Thus, Fred was invited so that the white attendees might also receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit from a white preacher.

Bosworth took a train to Hearne and then followed the music to find the camp site. Excitement for Jesus filled the air, and the white people who were listening on the outskirts of the camp invited Bosworth to come and preach to them about the power of God. Standing on a platform between the two segregated groups, Fred gave a short message on the love of Christ and the power of His Spirit to change lives.

"Please stay at my house tonight," one of the other white ministers invited him, "so that you can continue your message tomorrow." Bosworth welcomed the opportunity, and they headed toward the man's home. Suddenly, a mob of angry white men carrying clubs and sticks rushed up behind them. They spit and yelled at Bosworth, accusing him of coming to preach to the black congregation. He explained that the white congregation had invited him, but the incensed men still threatened him and ordered him to leave town immediately.

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Filled with a hatred that comes only from Satan, these men meant business, and Bosworth knew it. He agreed to leave and walked rapidly to the train station to head back to Dallas. Standing in the dark station in the quiet of the Texas night, Bosworth was suddenly confronted with an even larger mob of drunken men, who cursed aloud as they stumbled toward the train station.

The mob fell upon Bosworth and knocked him to the ground. They threatened him, saying he would never leave there alive, and beat him with boat oars and sticks all along his back until the skin was torn and bleeding. Several cracks of a baseball bat on his left arm resulted in a broken wrist, leaving his hand to hang painfully at his side. Through it all, Fred Bosworth didn't put up a fight. He committed himself to the Lord's protection and did nothing to defend himself.

As suddenly as the beating had begun, it stopped. The mob, tired of its sport, picked up Bosworth and demanded that he leave town immediately rather than wait for the next train. Bleeding, and with his wrist pounding with pain, Bosworth picked up his suitcase with his other hand and began walking toward Dallas. An attempt to flag down a train on the way proved futile, so he continued on foot. Two days later, he reached home and collapsed in front of his frightened wife. It took a month of bed rest to recover, but Bosworth was thrilled that he had been able to walk all those miles in a glorious state of deep intercession. He was thankful to be alive and able to preach the Word of God. Not long after this, a report came to Fred and Estella that the two leaders of those mobs had met with separate and untimely deaths.

What follows is a letter that Bosworth wrote to his mother shortly after the beating:

We were so glad to get yours, Bert's and Bertha's letters this morning and will answer at once to save you the unnecessary worry about me. When I wrote you from Calvert on my way home from Hearne, Tex., I started a letter telling you all about the mobbing and then thinking how it, might worry you, I tore up the first, letter and wrote you the other one, not, mentioning the pounding I got.

I did this only to save you from worrying. I have never seen any paper with the account, of this mobbing so I don't know what the

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paper said, wish you would send me the paper. I heard day before yesterday. It was in one of the papers here and went and looked over the files but failed to find it.

At, the annual State Encampment (Pentecostal) of the Col. people at Hearne, the people built a brush arbor, (continuing from the end of their tent) to accommodate the white people of Hearne who wanted to attend the camp meeting. This full gospel had never been preached to the white people at Hearne and besides filling this brush arbor, automobiles and carriages and many white people standing surrounded the tent to listen to the preaching and testimonies of the Col. people. Many of the white citizens became deeply interested in the teaching and not wanting to seek the Baptism at a colored altar. The white people urged the Col. leaders to send for some white Pentecostal teacher to come and help them into the Baptism. And so to accommodate these white citizens, I was sent for and of course went, to the campground and on Saturday night preached to two large audiences, one white and one black. God gave me unusual liberty and blessing in teaching and explaining the truths for which this movement stands, both audiences receiving the truth with great enthusiasm.

I was tired and thought I wouldn't preach that night but the people wanted me to and then God anointed me for it. As I was on my way to spend the night with another white preacher who had also come that day we were attacked by several roughs, one of whom had a revolver with which (as he and the others cursed us for coming there as they said to put them on a level with the d.[irty] n—s) they seemed determined to shoot us both down at once.

God was wonderfully with me and with perfect coolness, I told them that, I was doing God's will the very best I knew how, was ready to die and would offer no resistance to anything God permitted them to do, (these are not, the exact, words), but if they had no objections I would like to speak a few words of explanation before they shot us. At first they refused me this privilege, but finally said I could say what I wanted to. I then told them that I came with no thought or desire of pushing them on a level with

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anyone but, that it, was the white people who wanted me to come to help them, that I had done the very best, I knew and was willing to take anything God permitted.

With this explanation, they decided not to kill, but insisted that we should take the next train, and so we went to the depot and I bought my ticket to Dallas and the other Bro. went to his room for his suitcase; and while he was gone and I was waiting for my train, a larger mob of about 25 took me horn the depot and knocked me down and pounded me with heavy hardwood clubs with all their power, cursing and declaring that I would never preach again when they were through with me. As they pounded me with these heavy clubs (made from the oar of a boat), I offered no resistance, but committed myself to God and asked him not to let the blows break my spine. God stood wonderfully by me and no bones were broken except a slight fracture in my left wrist. When they left off pounding me with the clubs as I got up others of the mob who had no clubs knocked me down hitting me in the head with their fists. I was knocked down several times but was not for a moment unconscious, which was a miracle of God's care.

I was then not allowed to take my train but had to walk 9 miles to Calvert where I got a train Sunday at 2 p.m. for home.

The suffering during this pounding was terrible but as soon as it was over I looked away from wounds and bruises to God and he took away all suffering and put his power and strength upon me so that I carried a heavy suitcase with my right arm over 9 miles. I never had the slightest anger or ill feeling towards those men who beat me so cruelly, and the walk to Calvert in the dark with moon-light was the most heavenly experience of my life and the Lord gave me wonderful intercession for those men that He should forgive them and prepare them for his coming.

My flesh was mashed to the bone on my back down nearly to my knees, but since the beating I have been free from all suffering.

Others been made nervous and have broken down and wept as they were shown the wounds on my bow, but I have been absolutely free from nervousness, no fear and not even tired.

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He has been so precious to me since that I have thanked him many times for being privileged to know something of the "fellowship of his sufferings". If this moving was the result of some unwise thing I had done or for speaking anything but His own sweet message, I would be very sorry but since it came for plain obedience in preaching His gospel to every creature, it has given me great joy to experience this which was so common among the early Christians in the first centuries of the church.

I feel like I am several notches higher in the Christian life.

Already this experience God has used and made it a blessing to others and I have read some of the sweetest letters from God's people.

You need not worry one bit for we are not now preaching to Col. People and will not unless God clearly leads as he did when he led us to Queen City and other parts of Dallas. He put his seal upon this by saving many, healing many and baptizing over 225 with the Holy Ghost. The deepest and quickest work I have known of. We do not lay our own plans but wait for him.

We have just moved our tent from the corner of Weaskell and State Sts. To the corner of East Side and Washington Ave., and last night which was our first night in the new location, the tent was nearly full and the attention was fine. Pray that God will give us a great meeting there. We may move into some house near the tent in a few days.

Vivian is well and so sweet. God gives her at times the real burden for souls at which times the Spirit makes intercession through her in tongues. Bro. Graves (Fred A. Graves) is with us.

The paper just came from Z.C. (Zion City, Illinois) telling about my beating.

Not much like the facts. My face was not scratched but my head was bruised in several places, No marks left on my face.

Would love to see you all at home. We are all happy in the will of God.

I would much prefer to be faithful and have some little tribulation now than to fail to overcome and have to pass through the great

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tribulation soon to come. Praise God I am determined to have God's plan for my life carried out.

With much love to you all, I am Your Devoted Son.

Fred

Ten Years of Revival

As the Pentecostal wave moved through the country, Assemblies of God congregations began to spring up. In 1910, Bosworth established the First Assembly of God church in Dallas, and people flocked there from miles around to hear him preach. From the very beginning, seekers were saved and baptized in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. Bosworth didn't have any formal seminary training, but he was an intelligent man who studied the Bible with more diligence than he had displayed when teaching himself to play the cornet. God had placed him in the spiritual office of evangelist, as well as teacher, for building up the body of Christ. (See Ephesians 4:11–13.) This was evident to everyone who heard him.

In 1912, Bosworth invited Maria Woodworth-Etter, the famous Pentecostal evangelist, to lead a series of meetings at his church. During her six-month stay, revival rocked the city of Dallas. Scores of people were saved, filled with the Holy Spirit, and healed under her ministry. Bosworth became well-known among Pentecostals because of the success of Woodworth-Etter's meetings. Revival continued in his church for the next several years.

The number of Assemblies of God churches grew, and Bosworth was selected as a delegate to the General Council of the Assemblies of God denomination as it was being formed. In April of 1914, the first General Council met in Hot Springs, Arkansas, to discuss the new work. Bosworth was then invited to become one of the sixteen members of the executive presbyters. It was the role of the Council and the presbyters to set the tenets of faith for the new denomination.

Even while pastoring his church in Dallas and working as a delegate for the Assemblies of God, Fred Bosworth traveled over 75,000 miles throughout the Southwest and took every opportunity to preach. If there was even one ear open to the gospel of Jesus Christ, Fred was



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eager to bring the good news! He believed in an interceding church that also reached out to the lost, so he organized many tent meetings in different areas of Dallas that occurred simultaneously. The gospel was preached night after night, and more and more people turned to Christ for salvation.

From Pastor to Full-time Evangelist

As the revival began to slow down in Dallas, Fred and Estella's only son, four-year-old Vernon, became sick and suddenly died.

Within months of the loss, Fred resigned from the church he had pastored and loved. From years of studying the Word, Bosworth had come to the conclusion that speaking in tongues was not the only initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The other members of the Assemblies of God founding board disagreed with Bosworth; they believed unanimously that tongues as the initial evidence of the baptism should be one of the irrefutable tenets of the denomination. A fellow minister in the Dallas area began to spread rumors about Bosworth, accusing him of heresy among the Pentecostal churches.

Quietly and without protest, Bosworth turned in his Assemblies of God ordination papers in July 1918. He was invited to present his beliefs to the General Council one more time concerning why speaking in tongues need not be the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Bosworth did so with a humble heart, presenting his beliefs passionately. The Council listened but still voted against his proposals, and they parted ways.

With little time to recover from these tremendous disappointments, Fred faced another, greater tragedy. Estella had been a hardworking helpmate for eighteen years, but in her exuberance for the ministry, she often overexerted herself. As her health slipped, she continued to ignore the bed rest that she needed. Early in 1919, she developed a cough, which quickly became pneumonia and then tuberculosis. Even though prayers for healing went up in earnest, Estella Bosworth died on November 16, 1919, leaving two daughters without a mother. Fred had seen countless healings as a result of answered prayer, which made his wife's death seem an even greater tragedy, but he never gave up his faith in a faithful, living God.

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Through these tragedies, Fred Bosworth became a more compassionate human being. He was seen as kind, self-effacing, and completely dependent on the Lord for everything. Through these trials, his faith was not moved, so God gave him a greater power in witnessing for Him.

After finding someone to take care of his daughters, Fred Bosworth turned his steps to national evangelism, answering the call to preach wherever he could. He had rejoined the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church and asked his younger brother, Burton, to join in his revival ministry as the worship leader. They began traveling wherever they were invited, carrying a burning passion to see the lost come to Christ. The decade of the 1920s would see F. F. Bosworth preaching the Word of God in power with signs and wonders following.

Healing Victories in Lima, Ohio

In the summer of 1920, Bosworth was invited to preach at a revival in Lima, Ohio. The pastor had one simple request—that he would bring a message on the healing power of Jesus Christ for today. Accepting the summons as God’s will, Bosworth spent a great deal of time studying the Bible, both the Old and the New Testaments, to learn more about the healing presence of God.

God had brought Bosworth back from near death from tuberculosis through His healing power, so Fred knew that Jesus Christ healed today. Healing for the believer was a part of the salvation message; it was included in the price Christ had paid on the cross. Now, Fred studied the Word closely to find as much scriptural support as he could for his messages.

Fred still had one nagging fear. “I said to the Lord, ‘But suppose I preach healing, and the people come, and they don’t get healed?’ And the Lord responded, ‘If people didn’t get saved, you wouldn’t stop preaching the gospel.’”¹² With that, Fred went forth boldly to share the complete message of Jesus’ atonement.

The Lima meetings were held in a large tent during the hot evenings of August 1920. On the first night, Fred Bosworth stood at the podium and announced to the expectant audience, “I am convinced that healing of the body is just as much a part of the gospel as salvation for the soul.” He assured them that Christ longed to do for their “pain-wracked” bodies

Fred Bosworth stood at the podium and announced to the expectant audience, “I am convinced that healing of the body is just as much a part of the gospel as salvation for the soul.”

what He also wanted to do for their lost souls. Then, he made a bold proclamation: bring your sick and infirm—whether they know Jesus or not, God wants to heal them.

The congregation was electrified by this announcement, and many planned to return with their sick and dying loved ones. Bosworth emphasized that the saved and unsaved alike should bring the sick to be healed by a compassionate Christ. He offered hope that they could be well again.

The next night, hundreds of people were present; the night after that, thousands made their way to the tent meeting. Soon, the meetings had to be moved into Memorial Hall. Some came expecting a miracle; others came ready to laugh at failure. But everyone present saw the same things: deaf ears could hear, blind eyes could see, the lame could walk. The Holy Spirit was moving among the people, and He was unstoppable. Doctors came and brought their most critical patients, and many of them were cured.

A woman without hope named Alice Baker attended one of the early Lima meetings. She suffered from cancer of the face, and her upper lip had been so eaten away that her teeth were visible. She kept her face covered with cloths so that no one would see the destroyed flesh. To ease her agonizing pain so she could sleep at night, the doctors had resorted to giving her small doses of ether. Alice had spent what little money she had on appointments with specialists in New York and New Jersey, but there was absolutely nothing they could do for her. Alice was filled with despair.

When she heard about the healing meetings taking place at Memorial Hall, she didn't understand what was happening there, but she decided to go and see if there was any hope left. The first thing she heard from the pulpit was the price Jesus Christ had paid on the cross for her

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sins. With a glad and grateful heart, she knelt and accepted Him as her Savior. Then, she went forward for a healing prayer.

She later recounted what happened when she met with the Bosworth team.

After they prayed for me it seemed a rubber cap was drawn over my face, and it gradually slipped off, and I knew I was healed. I told a lady to remove the bandages and God blessed my soul, so I could not help shouting, and I shouted many times. It is so good to be without pain....Oh, I am so happy all the time. I went down the street shouting....The next morning after I was healed I went to the hotel where I worked and showed the lady that I was without the bandages and that the Lord had given me a new lip that night, and she was shocked....Many have come from other towns to see me...and hear about my healing. I am glad to tell them. My doctor came to see for himself, and all he said was it was wonderful.¹³

F. F. Bosworth was a simple man with a heart to bring the lost to Christ. He believed that physical healing was included in the atonement and that true healings would draw crowds to hear the message of Christ's salvation, the ultimate goal. He was also a very deliberate man, so he looked for confirmation of each healing that took place. Often, the local newspapers would record in detail the miracles that had occurred on those August nights in Lima.

In an article published in the *National Labor Tribune*, a newspaper in nearby Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Bertram Miller wrote of the miraculous Bosworth campaign, "There has been no criticism from the public press, no fanaticism or carnal emotionalism at any of the services.... Many denominations and nationalities were in attendance at the meetings, and many were saved and wonderfully healed, wondering why they had never heard the full gospel before...."¹⁴

Some were healed instantly, many at their homes in the following days. At one service alone, there were ten doctors present watching the proceedings with deep interest. Several of them had terminally ill patients of their own healed before their very eyes.¹⁵

The Miracles Move to Pittsburgh

After several weeks of ministering in Lima, the Bosworth team moved on to Pittsburgh. Many of the newly healed went with them, eager to help in the work and pray for the sick themselves. Bosworth never believed that healing came through his hands alone but through faith in God's Word that built up in the hearts of those who needed healing.

The miracles in Pittsburgh surpassed those in Lima. No church was large enough to accommodate the crowds, so the meetings were held in Carnegie Hall in Oakland, a suburb near downtown Pittsburgh. The *National Labor Tribune* continued to report on the amazing meetings as they were occurring.

All denominations crowd the hall—Catholics, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, United Presbyterians, Primitive Methodists, Methodist Protestant, Pentecostal Nazarene, with many others, may be seen among those at the altar seeking Divine aid. Several hundred seekers after God crowd the platform daily....Doctors, lawyers, financiers, merchants, professional men of all types and caliber. Christian Scientists—including practitioners—nurses, and head nurses from the hospitals and sanitariums, all seeking soul salvation or bodily healing. It is a sight that astounds the onlookers to see those multitudes seeking their way to God....Beyond belief are the results.¹⁶

“John Sproul Can Talk!”

John Sproul had fought in WWI as a young soldier. While he was on a special assignment to secure supplies in France, he and a friend were hit with mustard gas. The friend died within a day or two, but John survived—just barely. He had to have fourteen operations in the French hospital where he was admitted. Six operations were performed on his throat and eight on his lungs. Following the operations, he completely lost the ability to speak, and so many of his neck muscles were cut away that he had a hard time holding his head up.¹⁷

Sproul returned to the States in constant pain, with hemorrhaging in his lungs and frequent bouts of stomach sickness or sudden

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unconsciousness. He traveled throughout the country trying to get medical help, but his case was declared hopeless. When he returned to his hometown of Pittsburgh, the mayor, Edward Babcock, took up his cause. The country was disturbed by the lack of medical aid for wounded veterans, so Mayor Babcock and the local congressmen sent Sproul to Washington, D.C., for special medical treatment.

When he returned from Washington, Sproul informed the mayor that he had been pronounced incurable by the physicians there and given a certificate of total disability for life. He was awarded a monthly disability payment, but he still faced a future filled with unrelenting pain.

By the providence of God, soon after Sproul's return from Washington, he saw an advertisement for Evangelist F. F. Bosworth's campaign in Pittsburgh. He went simply because he felt he had nothing to lose. As he sat and listened to the testimonies of those who had given their hearts to Christ, the Spirit moved in his soul. He later exclaimed, "Oh, the joy that filled my soul when I realized the Lord was ready to save me, right then, and I said, 'Yes' to God. How I longed to be able to speak, to tell people that I knew I was saved!"¹⁸

When Bosworth called for those who wished to be healed to come forward, John Sproul walked up to the platform with a heart full of faith. After prayer, a Christian brother exclaimed, "Praise the Lord," and Sproul thought the man meant that he should praise the Lord with his own voice. "Of all the foolish things," John reasoned, "to expect me to praise the Lord when I can't talk!" Then, he thought, *Well, that isn't faith. I'll try, even if nobody hears it.*¹⁹

The moment he made the effort to praise the Lord, a strange power seemed to fill his whole body. Pain coursed through him from his stomach through his throat and into his head. It was excruciating, but in an instant, it was gone. With it went all of the agonizing pain that John had experienced for four years. There was no more lung pain, no more throat pain, and no more wheezing! At the top of his voice, he yelled, "Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!" Soon after the service, his family cautioned John to be careful with his newly recovered voice, but his response was, "I was shouting His praises, and I knew as long as I praised God, nothing would ever happen to my voice."²⁰

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John called his friends and his mother on the telephone to tell them the amazing news, but none could believe it was he. When the news reached the local newspaper reporters, they insisted on meeting with him, as did Mayor Babcock. Fred walked into the mayor's office with his head held high, and he smiled and spoke normally. The next day's newspaper hit the stands for the whole city to see the headline, "John Sproul Can Talk!"

The Sproul family rejoiced when John's three-year-old daughter, Mary Jane, who had never heard him speak, clapped her little hands and exclaimed, "Daddy can talk! Daddy can talk! Jesus made Daddy talk!"²¹

The Veterans Bureau ordered John to report for tests, after which they declared him well, indeed. He had to forsake his disability payments, but he had been healed by God and could work now. For years after his healing, he corresponded with F. F. Bosworth, letting him know how much he enjoyed perfect health in his body and his soul!

Christ the Healer

From his intimacy with Scriptures on divine healing, Fred wrote *Christ the Healer* in 1924. The book remains a classic work on Christ's healing power, and it is just as relevant to the body of Christ today as it was upon publication nearly one hundred years ago.

The primary question Bosworth wanted to answer in his book was, "Did Christ redeem us from our diseases when He atoned for our sins?"²² To him, the Bible answered with a resounding "Yes!" He believed that the healing nature of God was revealed in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

In the Old Testament, the book of Exodus recounts the Israelites' miraculous journey through the Red Sea, which God parted through Moses, as they fled captivity in Egypt. When they reached the other side of the sea, this same God of salvation introduced Himself as their healer for the first time, saying, "*I am the LORD that healeth you*" (Exodus 15:26). In Psalms, King David also recognized the healing nature of God's salvation: "*Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all of his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases*" (Psalm 103:2–3). David realized that both the forgiveness of sins and the healing of the body were benefits that belonged to the people of God.

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Perhaps the most decisive Scripture of all for Bosworth was Isaiah 53:5: *“He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”*

In these Scriptures, the Lord is revealed as a complete Savior who forgives sins *and* heals diseases. Both benefits are offered equally for anyone who would receive them.

In *Christ the Healer*, Bosworth wrote that God’s healing nature continued to be revealed in the earthly ministry of Christ, citing Matthew 4:23: *“And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people,”* Matthew 12:15: *“Jesus...withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all,”* and Luke 6:19: *“And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.”*

Bosworth was convinced that these Scriptures clearly revealed the will of God concerning healing. He declared, “Faith begins where the will of God is known.”²³ The Word reveals that it is God’s will to heal, and believers can accept His will by faith—faith that is produced by hearing the Word of God. (See Romans 10:17.)

Finally, Bosworth pointed out that the Greek word for salvation, *soteria*, implies all the deliverance, preservation, healing, and soundness that Christ promised with His death and resurrection. Full salvation was in the atonement of the blood of Christ.

Faith Cures a Young Girl

During the first half of the 1920s, Fred and his brother Burton traveled continuously throughout the nation. Their primary purpose at each meeting was to save souls.

During a seven-week campaign in Ottawa, Canada, the “conservative” Canadians showed a great enthusiasm for the Lord. Twelve thousand people surrendered their hearts to Christ, and ten thousand people attended the farewell meeting. The Canadians were so grateful for the powerful message that Christ heals soul and body that five thousand of

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them accompanied the Bosworth party to their train. They picked up the brothers and carried them on their shoulders all the way to the train station! Yet Fred Bosworth was always careful to give the glory to God and not to take it for himself.

It had been several years since Estella Bosworth had passed away, and Fred was perfectly content to remain unmarried while serving the Lord. But he also desired God's will for his life. When he was forty-five years old, he met a young lady named Florence Valentine, a post-graduate student at a New York campus of Nyack Bible School. When Bosworth met her, he realized that she shared his desire to serve God and preach the gospel. They both prayed that God's will would be done and were married quietly a short time later. Florence brought him great joy and was an excellent helpmate during their thirty-six years of marriage.

With Florence helping to spread the message of faith in God's healing power, the Bosworth brothers continued to hold healing meetings throughout the 1920s. After ministering together for five years, Burton moved on to minister on his own, while Fred and Florence conducted much of their ministry in the Chicago area. The revival meetings were often held in Chicago's Gospel Tabernacle, and people continued to be miraculously healed.

On Wednesday, March 28, 1928, the *Chicago Daily News* featured a front-page headline that read, "Deaf Six Years, Faith Cures Her." Beneath the headline was a large photo of Fred Bosworth teaching a smiling teenage girl how to use a telephone.

The girl was Ruth Peiper, age sixteen. Her mother had died when Ruth was only eight, and her father had refused to provide a home for her. So, Ruth had been sent to a home for dependent girls. When she was eleven years old, she contracted diphtheria and scarlet fever. Due to those illnesses, she lost hearing in both her ears. She also had to wear a body cast and walked with a noticeable limp due to a severe curvature of the spine. Her doctors had not been able to help her, and her stay in the home became far longer than that of most other girls her age.

Ruth had become a favorite at the home, and one of the volunteers had taken a special interest in her. This volunteer had urged Martha Dixon, the matron, to take Ruth to a Bosworth healing meeting at the

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Chicago Gospel Tabernacle. Ready to do anything that might help Ruth, Mrs. Dixon took her to the meeting. That night, March 2, 1928, Ruth Peiper was completely healed!

Ruth came running into the front parlor of the home to tell the *Chicago Daily News* reporter more of her story. “‘Yes, it’s all true,’ she said as she walked across the room without a limp. ‘Something just suddenly happened to me as I stood on the platform being anointed by the Reverend Bosworth. It was like lightning and thunder in my head. Then there was a ringing in my ears.’”

Riding home on the bus that night with Mrs. Dixon, Ruth couldn’t believe how loud everything was. Every time someone paid the bus fare and the bell rang, she jumped. The sounds were loud, but they were also wonderful! “‘It’s all in the Bible,’ Ruth concluded to the reporter. ‘It is just believing what is there that has made me well.’”²⁴

The power of God to heal was still moving through the Bosworths’ ministry at the end of the 1920s.

“What Manner of Man Is This?”

Without a doubt, F. F. Bosworth had become one of the most successful of the healing evangelists of the 1920s. But what sort of man was he? Many of his Pentecostal contemporaries were known for their loud meetings and emotional appeals. Bosworth was different. So, who *was* Fred Bosworth? With deep humility and compassion, Bosworth was confident in God, in His Word, and in the Lord’s calling on his life. Because of these things, he never felt threatened by the successes of other ministries or felt that he was in competition with other preachers. He strived for purity in his actions and motives. The integrity of his life and ministry brought the respect of others, even those who disagreed with him. In temperament, he was a man of good humor who always tried to remain optimistic, no matter the circumstances.

One news reporter from Pittsburgh alluded to Luke 8:25 when he wrote, “The simplicity of the services and the wanton lack of any attempt to play upon the emotions of the great throngs who crowd themselves into the building naturally incites the onlooker to inquire, ‘What manner of man is this?’”²⁵

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Eunice N. Perkins, Bosworth's early biographer, was a great admirer of his preaching style, which she described thusly: "No dramatics! A clear, convincing logic oftentimes, for altho uneducated in a worldly sense,

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it preached.**

he has an unusually bright mind, has studied the cream of Christian literature, and is continually being taught the Word of God, by the Spirit of God. Moreover, his simple naturalness, or natural simplicity, is delightfully refreshing to all who hear him, while it is, at the same time, more forceful than the most amazing pulpit oratory."²⁶

Bosworth believed in the living power of the Bible to build faith in the hearts of those who read from its pages or heard it preached. Because he believed so steadfastly in the solid foundation of the Word, he preached with a quiet, firm authority that was uncommon at the time.

When the Bosworth party was conducting a crusade in St. Paul, Minnesota, the Reverend J. D. Williams reviewed F. F. Bosworth in the local newspaper. He admired "the wide scope of his message. The preaching was Scriptural and earnest and the truth presented covered the entire Fourfold Gospel, i.e., Christ as Saviour, Sanctifier, Healer and Coming King. Special stress was laid upon the Atonement covering both spiritual and physical needs."²⁷ Commendable aspects of Bosworth's ministry, according to Williams, included the thorough preparation of the workers who were ready to pray for those who came forward, as well as the preparation of the hearts of those who were so ready to receive.

Williams went on,

The meetings were generally very quiet, with few expressions of any kind from the audience....It was evident...that each message was taking deep root in hearts....There was no attempt upon the part of the Evangelist to produce an effect or to urge anyone to hasty decisions by emotional appeals. The total dependence

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upon the Holy Spirit for all results was gratifying. In short, “They preached not themselves but Christ.”²⁸

There was a “holy joy” that pervaded the atmosphere at Bosworth’s meetings. Because the man himself was joyful at what had been provided in Christ’s atonement, he passed that same hope and joy on to his audiences. The men and women who came to the Bosworth revivals heard the good news of complete salvation in Christ!

Fred Bosworth was also acknowledged as a gifted teacher. P. S. Campbell, a professor of Greek from McMaster University, Toronto, said this of Bosworth:

His addresses are thoroughly biblical. He believes in the Word of God, and his arguments are amply supported by quotations from the sacred Scriptures. His language is absolutely free from sensationalism, and is the acme of simplicity. And what is clear to himself, he never fails to make clear to his audience. His sermons show that he possesses in a marked degree the teaching gift. Hence his hearers never fail to be instructed by his presentation of the truth.²⁹

Pioneer of Radio Evangelism

As the 1920s drew to a close, there was such a demand for Bosworth’s time and ministry, yet so few resources, that he realized he needed a new means to reach people with the gospel. After ministering with Paul Rader in Chicago for a while, Bosworth had his answer: radio. Rader had already begun one of the first Christian radio programs in the nation. The first crude radios had been released for sale in 1926, and people had rushed to purchase them as a welcome addition to their homes.

F. F. Bosworth’s first radio program was called *The Sunshine Hour*. Each morning at 9:00 a.m. on Chicago’s station WJJD, Bosworth’s theme song “Don’t Forget to Pray” would fill the airwaves. Soon after, he established the nonprofit organization National Radio Revival Missionary Crusaders to reach the masses with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Bosworths settled in River Forest, Illinois, outside of Chicago, and Fred recorded his radio shows in a studio in his home. The message



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then traveled ten miles to Chicago by telephone wire and was put on the air from the radio station. Thousands heard the message and wrote to Bosworth requesting prayer for healings or praising God for their salvation. The successful reports of lives touched by the Holy Spirit poured into his home office. By the time he retired from radio ministry in the 1940s, Bosworth had received over 250,000 letters from those who had been touched or healed from his preaching.

Even though Bosworth's daily radio preaching enabled him to limit his travels, his healing meetings were not discontinued altogether. Thousands still flocked to hear him preach the Word of God with power and to receive their healings. But in the 1930s, the Great Depression made it very difficult to travel far from home, so most of his ministering was done in the Chicago area. In his years of radio ministry, Bosworth may have reached tens of thousands with the gospel message, but he was largely reserved when it came to his personal life.

During this time, Bosworth adopted a controversial view called British Israelism, a concept that gained popularity in the early twentieth century and continues to be accepted by some people today. British Israelism maintains that Western Europeans, particularly those from Great Britain, are direct descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel who were taken into captivity by the Assyrians. (See 2 Kings 17:18.) The belief was most widely upheld in England and the United States. How strongly Bosworth embraced this idea is unknown, but he did resign from the Christian and Missionary Alliance denomination for several years because of it. By the mid-1940s, Bosworth had renounced his belief in British Israelism and was reinstated in the church.

Retirement Not in His Plans

By 1947, at seventy-one years of age, Fred Bosworth was ready for the next step in his life. He and Florence decided it was time to retire to Miami, Florida. But what would this dedicated man of God do with the remainder of his years?

But retirement was clearly was not in the Lord's plan for him. William Branham, an American evangelist from the Midwest, was beginning to move out in his healing ministry and had been invited to Miami,

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Florida, to conduct a revival campaign. Curious, Fred and Florence attended the revival and were moved by the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit and the number of healings that had been recorded as a result of Branham's ministry. Bosworth introduced himself to the younger man and, after they'd spent some time fellowshiping together, offered to travel with him and minister as part of his team.

Branham jumped at the opportunity to be mentored by the older, wiser evangelist, who had forty years of experience in the healing ministry. Beginning in 1948, Fred Bosworth traveled with the Branham team and taught about faith for salvation and divine healing. He spoke at the daytime meetings so that Branham would have time to rest and have enough energy to conduct the larger healing meetings, which were held in the evening. Joining them in the ministry was W. Ern Baxter, a young evangelist from Canada, who served as Branham's traveling manager and preached daytime messages during the campaign, as well. The reports of Branham's successful healing meetings were written by Gordon Lindsay in the magazine *The Voice of Healing*. As a result, Branham's reputation as a Pentecostal grew rapidly.

Fred Bosworth was still very sharp-witted and solid in his biblical presentation of the Word. In 1950, Branham was challenged to a debate on divine healing by W. E. Best, the pastor of a large Baptist church in Houston, Texas. Best believed that miracles and divine healing had ceased, and that the healing evangelists were frauds. Branham declined the challenge, but seventy-three-year-old F. F. Bosworth accepted it enthusiastically. He was an adept apologist and welcomed the opportunity to spread the truth about God's healing promises in the atonement.

The debate was covered closely by the local newspapers. During the debate, Bosworth presented the scriptural evidence he had outlined years earlier in *Christ the Healer*, including healing in Christ's atonement and one of the redemptive names of God, Jehovah-Rapha. Then, he appealed to the "living witnesses" who were present, asking them to stand if they had been healed by God. The *Houston Press* reported, "When the Rev. Best made a point, the Rev. Bosworth would rush to the microphone on stage and dramatically ask those in the audience who had been cured through faith to stand. Each time hundreds would rise. 'How many of you are Baptists?' the Rev. Bosworth shouted. At least 100 stood up."³⁰

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Bosworth was confident in the Word of God and the proof that God was still ministering healing power to His people.

Overseas Ministry Captures Bosworth's Heart

William Branham also ministered overseas. On November 25, 1951, F. F. Bosworth looked out incredulously at a vast crowd of people at the Grayville Race Course in Durban, South Africa. The police estimated the crowd at 75,000 people. In over forty years of ministry, Bosworth had never seen anything like the tens of thousands who sat there with open hearts to hear the Word of God.

In the morning service, Bosworth preached on the Holy Spirit's desire to heal and explained how to obtain the faith to receive that healing. Later that day, thirty-seven-year-old Ern Baxter gave a message of salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ. When Baxter invited those who wanted to receive Christ as Savior to stand, over ten thousand people stood to their feet. Turning to Bosworth, Baxter whispered in awe, "They must have misunderstood me. There couldn't be all these thousands who want to become Christians!"³¹ Baxter repeated the message of commitment to Christ, and the people waved their hands in surrender to the Lord. Later that evening, William Branham brought forth the message, and thousands more were saved and healed by the grace of God. During the three services on that day alone, an estimated thirty thousand people gave their hearts to Christ! Bosworth was delighted to be a part of this move of God.

In those later days of ministry, nothing touched Fred Bosworth's heart like the overseas ministry he participated in. He was astounded by the sizes of the crowds and the open hearts of faith, the likes of which he had never experienced in the U.S. While he was traveling with the Branham team, they went on to hold overseas campaigns in Germany and Switzerland.

Bosworth was in his mid-seventies by this time, but he still carried a full load of responsibilities in these foreign fields, teaching every morning and bringing the Word of God to help build up the faith of those to whom he ministered. He also stayed at the evening meetings long after Branham left, exhausted, and prayed for the sick.

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F. F. Bosworth and William Branham in Germany in 1955

In 1952, Bosworth left the Branham campaigns, but he continued in the foreign mission field for several more years, conducting meetings in South Africa and Cuba, and taking two missionary visits to Japan, where his final meeting took place.

Praising as He Goes Home

One of Bosworth's biographers, who wrote in the *Herald of Faith* magazine in 1964, was Oscar Blomgren Jr., a young man who first met the healing evangelist as a boy. At five years of age, Oscar was walking precariously on the back of a park bench near Lake Forest, Illinois, when he fell. He was rushed to the hospital, where an X-ray revealed that his elbow had been shattered into several fragments. Doctors were concerned that his arm would be stiff for the rest of his life.

Oscar's father was a faithful Christian and a personal friend of Bosworth, so he called the evangelist at his home for prayer. He didn't ask him to come and lay hands on the child, just to pray in faith on the phone for Oscar in the name of Jesus. The next day, the little boy had several hours of surgery on his arm. The following morning, X-rays were taken again to determine whether the surgery had been successful. Puzzled, the doctors ordered a third X-ray. They called Oscar's parents into the therapy room to discuss the results. Both X-rays revealed no sign of a break. It was as if nothing had happened. Oscar's elbow was completely restored.

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The rambunctious little boy hung from his arms on a crossbar in the hospital therapy room while his parents and the doctors discussed his miraculous recovery. His cast was removed immediately. In relating the story, Oscar Jr. always gratefully added that his once-shattered arm played in many successful football games in the years to follow!

In his biography of Bosworth, Oscar remembered the man with great affection:

Fred Bosworth gave me, and tens of thousands of others an unshakable faith in God that we will carry to our graves. He demonstrated again and again that the real benefits of Christianity are not just spiritual, but physical as well. And through him God gave the inquiring mind a granite-solid foundation for faith.... Those of us who were privileged to know him will remember him always. But more important, the Faith that he gave us will live on in our children and grandchildren for years to come.³²

In 1958, when Bosworth returned to Florida, and to Florence, after his final campaign in Japan, he announced to his family that the Lord was about to take him home. At the age of eighty-one, he was not ill; he had asked the Lord to allow him to live his life without succumbing to any illness, and he simply believed that his time on earth was over.

Bosworth retired to his bed, and all of his children came home to say good-bye, getting together for the first time in over sixteen years. His son Bob wrote about the final weeks of his father's life:

About three weeks after he took to his bed, we were around the bed talking, laughing, singing. Suddenly Dad looked up; he never saw us again. He saw what was invisible to us. He began to greet people and hug people—he was enraptured. Every once in a while he would break off and look around saying, “Oh, it is so beautiful.”³³

For several hours, Fred remained in this state, between two worlds. Then, he quietly fell asleep. Sometime later, he passed from sleep to his eternal place in Christ. It was Thursday, January 23, 1958. After five decades of honoring and preaching about Jesus Christ, his Redeemer and Healer, Bosworth joined Him in heaven. It has been estimated that

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during his lifetime, Bosworth was instrumental in more than one million decisions for Christ. There would have been many joyful souls to greet him in heaven.

Just days before his death, Bosworth was quoted as saying, “All I have lived for, for the past sixty years, has been the Lord Jesus. And, any minute, I’m looking for Him to walk in the door and go with Him for eternity.”³⁴

CHAPTER ONE



ENDNOTES

- ¹ Eunice M. Perkins, *Joybringer Bosworth: His Life's Story* (1921), 162.
- ² *Exploits of Faith* magazine, 1928, 4.
- ³ Perkins, *Joybringer Bosworth*, 163.
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ Ibid., 25.
- ⁶ Ibid., 27.
- ⁷ Oscar Blomgren Jr., "Man of God, Fred F. Bosworth," Part IV: Bosworth Begins His Work, *Herald of Faith*, (June 1964), 16.
- ⁸ Ibid. (Citing Perkins, *Joybringer Bosworth*, 37.)
- ⁹ <http://www.healingandrevival.com/BioBosworth.htm>.
- ¹⁰ *Bosworth's Life Story: The Life Story of Evangelist F. F. Bosworth, as Told by Himself in the Alliance Tabernacle*, Toronto (Toronto, Ontario: Alliance Book Room), 3.
- ¹¹ Perkins, *Joybringer Bosworth*, 53, 55.
- ¹² Bosworth, *Life Story*, 22.
- ¹³ Perkins, *Joybringer Bosworth*, 129, 130.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., 89–90.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., 91.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., 99, 100.
- ¹⁷ *Exploits of Faith* magazine, 1928, 14.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., 15.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ Ibid., 15.
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² F. F. Bosworth, *Christ the Healer* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2000), 12.
- ²³ Bosworth, *Life Story*, 43.
- ²⁴ *Exploits of Faith*, 25.
- ²⁵ Perkins, *Joybringer Bosworth*, 101.
- ²⁶ Ibid., 94.
- ²⁷ Ibid., 114.
- ²⁸ Ibid., 115.
- ²⁹ Ibid., 169.
- ³⁰ Roscoe Barnes III, *F. F. Bosworth: The Man Behind "Christ the Healer"* (Newcastle upon Tyne, England: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 52.
- ³¹ *The Voice of Healing* magazine (South Africa), March 1952.
- ³² Blomgren Jr., "Man of God," 15.
- ³³ Barnes, *The Man Behind*, 15.
- ³⁴ Ibid.

