

Bosworth Matters

Date: Sunday, October 7, 2018

Website: ffbosworth.strikingly.com

12 Mistaken Claims about F.F. Bosworth

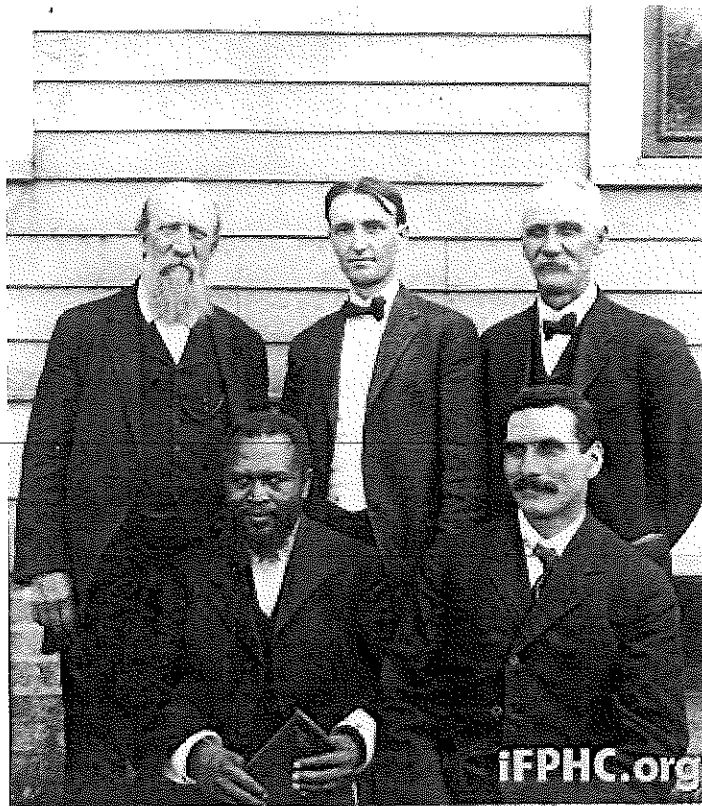
By Roscoe Barnes III

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

Copyright © 2018

#FFBosworth

#BosworthMatters



F.F. Bosworth standing in middle.

Five men associated with the Azusa Street revival standing in front of a building (possibly the Azusa Street Mission), ca. 1907. Standing in back (l-r): John A. D. Adams, F. F. Bosworth, and Tom Hezmalhalch. Sitting in front (l-r): William J. Seymour and John G. Lake. Photo courtesy of Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center.

Today there's a growing number of articles, blog posts, and other resources available on F.F. Bosworth. Unfortunately, some of the published items have flaws and cannot be trusted. Some present rumors as facts and exaggerations as truth. Little is corroborated or based on solid research. Devotional commentary on Bosworth is commonly shared, but critical analysis is often omitted.

This blog post is an attempt to provide insight into Bosworth's life history while also setting the record straight on some of the most common misconceptions held about him and his ministry. Specifically, it lists 12 mistaken claims that have been made about him. Each claim is addressed with pertinent material extracted from legitimate sources.

Claim #1: F.F. Bosworth grew up in Zion City, Ill.

Fact: F.F. Bosworth did not grow up in Zion City, the town founded as a Christian community by John Alexander Dowie. He grew up near Utica, Neb. Bosworth was married and in his early 20s when he and his family moved from Fitzgerald, Ga. to Zion.

Where the above claim originated is not clear. But I cannot help but wonder if it is simply a misreading of David E. Harrell Jr. In his book, *All Things Are Possible* (Indiana University Press, 1975), Harrell wrote: "One of the most successful [healing revivalists] was Fred F. Bosworth of Zion. His family had moved there while he was a youth and he served as band director at Dowie's church."

Perhaps someone saw Harrell's use of the term "youth" and assumed Bosworth was a child when he came to the town?

Claim #2: As a healing evangelist, Bosworth was unique in that he seldom had to lay hands on the sick to see them healed. He would simply preach the Word of God and people were healed as they listened in their seats.

Fact: There are certainly reports of people being healed in Bosworth's meetings without him ever laying hands on them in prayer. But he and his brother, B.B. Bosworth, routinely anointed the sick with oil and prayed the prayer of faith for their healing. They used prayer cards and prayer lines. Also worth noting is the fact that claims of people being "healed as they listened in their seats" can be found in the ministries of many healing evangelists.

In Eunice M. Perkins' *Joybringer Bosworth: His Life Story* (John J. Scruby, 1921), a report of an early revival meeting by Bosworth included this statement:

But every night, after the invitation to sinners at the close of the sermon, the sick are given opportunity to come up and be anointed and prayed for, according to the command of James 5:14, 15, which is the direct, Divine prescription for the sick Christian, whatever his ailment or malady.

Perkins' biography featured many cases of people being healed through the laying on of hands. Not surprisingly, Bosworth included similar testimonies in *Christ the Healer* and in his magazine, *Exploits of Faith*.

In 1949, Bosworth spoke with T.L. Osborn about the idea of praying for the sick en masse, something Bosworth would practice in meetings in South Africa in 1951. For more information on this topic, see my article, "F.F. Bosworth in South Africa: A Historical Analysis of His Later

Ministry and Healing Methodology" (*Africa Journal of Pentecostal Studies*, December 2007).

Claim #3: Eunice M. Perkins, F.F. Bosworth's biographer, was actually his daughter.

Fact: The person who made the above statement did not provide a source or citation for the claim. Without any data or literature to support the view, it is highly unlikely that it's true. In 2005, I reached out to historian Wayne E. Warner about Perkins and her relationship with Bosworth. He sent me an email with this reply: "We know nothing of that relationship."

Claim #4: David J. du Plessis witnessed Bosworth praying for deaf students in Chicago in 1928 that resulted in the closing of their school for the deaf.

Fact: David J. du Plessis mentioned the healings of the deaf students in a tribute to Bosworth that appeared in the April 1958 Issue of *World-Wide Revival*. He did not say that he actually saw the healings. He simply mentioned the newspapers' account of the incident. He wrote:

Fred Bosworth received a lot of publicity in the Chicago Daily News and other metropolitan newspapers when a large number of students who were attending a school for the deaf were miraculously healed, their healings causing the school to close.

Claim #5: He only wrote and published two books throughout his lifetime: *Christ the Healer* and *The Christian Confession*.

Fact: Not true. The above-mentioned books are just two of his popular titles. He actually wrote and published quite a few books. Of course, *Christ the Healer* (1924), his most famous book, was also his largest in terms of length. His other titles, which were technically booklets, included:

How to Have a Revival

Bosworth's Life Story: The Life Story of Evangelist F.F. Bosworth, as Told by Himself in the Alliance Tabernacle, Toronto

Is Healing in the Atonement?

The Key to the Windows of Heaven; or, God's Financial Plan

The Faith that Takes Hold of Things not Seen

The Greatest Sin or The Sin of Omission

Directions to Those Needing Healing

Paul's Thorn

How to Appropriately the Redemptive and Covenant Blessing of Bodily Healing, with Supplement, Appropriating Faith

Claim #6: He did not preach about financial prosperity.

Fact: Bosworth did indeed preach and write about prosperity. In fact, he wrote *The Key to The Windows of Heaven or God's Financial Plan, with supplement, Should Sinners Tithe?*

The 24-page booklet made an argument for paying tithes. It discussed the material blessings for doing so, as well as the temporal blessings that come through giving.

Claim #7: He opposed medicine, physicians, and hospitals.

Fact: Actually, Bosworth acknowledged the contributions of medicine and physicians. He was known to praise people in the medical field, and he sought their input in his efforts to substantiate and support claims of healing.

In Eunice M. Perkins' *Joybringer Bosworth*, the healing evangelist gave the following statement about medical services:

I confess my ignorance of the human anatomy and of medical therapeutics, and I believe there is a place for these men, -- that many times we need a physician diagnostically and for mechanical things, such as setting broken bones, etc. I believe in them for hygienic reasons, to conserve the laws of health. I believe every citizen should stand by the Health Department and help keep disease out of the city, and I can listen to them in these matters, but when it comes to the Gospel, in that I can instruct them.

Not surprisingly, Bosworth also presented his view of the medical field in *Christ the Healer*. In an argument about God's view of sickness and health, he wrote:

I truly thank God for all the help that has ever come to sufferers through the physician, through the surgeon, the hospital and the trained nurse; but, if sickness is the will of God, then, to quote one writer, "Every physician is a lawbreaker; every trained nurse is defying the Almighty; every hospital is a house of rebellion, instead of a house of mercy."

Claim #8: He mentored Oral Roberts.

Fact: It's probably a stretch to say Bosworth "mentored" Oral Roberts. However, he did visit one of Robert's tent meetings where he spoke and offered support for Robert's ministry. His letter of support appeared in Robert's *Healing Waters* magazine. For a look at Bosworth's letter (and Roberts' response), see my blog post, "Did F.F. Bosworth Mentor Oral Roberts?"

Claim #9: He always accepted the revelations of William Branham as messages of God, believing he had 100% accuracy.

Fact: It appears that during the early days of their ministry together, Bosworth actually believed that Branham was accurate with his "gift." He suggested as much in his article, "Gifts of Healing Plus," that appeared in the March 1950 issue of *The Voice of Healing*:

Not once during the more than three years since receiving the gift have these revelations failed to produce perfect miracles exactly as he had already seen them in visions. At these times he can say with absolute certainty, "Thus saith the Lord," and he is never wrong.

However, in 1951, Bosworth rebuked Branham in the presence of other Christian leaders in South Africa and told him that he was wrong about a decision based on one of his visions. For a closer look at that incident, see my article, "Brother Branham, you're wrong."

Claim #10: His ministry was scandal-free as he maintained a consistent Christian testimony to the end.

Fact: One dark moment in Bosworth's ministry occurred in the 1930s. According to historian Dr. Paul L. King, Bosworth embraced "the British Israelism heresy" and lost favor with the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA). Bosworth recanted in 1944 and "was welcomed back into the C&MA," King wrote in *Genuine Gold: The Cautiously Charismatic Story of the Early Christian and Missionary Alliance* (Word & Spirit Press, 2006).

Claim #11: Some of the reported healing cases in Bosworth's ministry turned out to be untrue or misleading.

Fact: There are two things I have come to believe about Bosworth and other healing evangelists: 1. All were not healed in their meetings (or through their respective ministries), and 2. Some who claimed they were healed were not actually healed, and tragically, they suffered or died a short time after confessing they were healed.

Out of the thousands of people Bosworth ministered to -- and the thousands who reported being healed -- some, I'm sure, were not actually healed. Some who came to his meetings in wheelchairs unfortunately left his meetings in wheelchairs. It's also possible that some may have lost their healing due to lifestyle issues. A smoker, for example, may be healed of cancer, but what would happen if he or she continued smoking? Bosworth, of course, has outlined a number of reasons why people may lose their healing. He addressed the issue in the chapter, "How to Receive Healing from Christ" in *Christ the Healer*.

Claim #12: He was never known to be sick a day in his life, and he died without sickness or disease.

Fact: Bosworth was diabetic, according to Dr. Paul L. King, who noted this in his book, *Genuine Gold: The Cautiously Charismatic Story of the Early Christian and Missionary Alliance* (Word & Spirit Press, 2006). He wrote: "The Bosworth brothers both suffered from diabetes in their later years and died less than a month apart in 1958."

**Would you like to know more
about F.F. Bosworth?**

Follow the *Bosworth Matters* blog!

**You can start right here:
ffbosworth.strikingly.com**

For more information:

Visit the F.F. Bosworth page here: <https://roscoereporting.blogspot.com/p/ff-bosworth.html>
Questions about the research and commentary on F.F. Bosworth may be directed to Roscoe Barnes III, Ph.D., via email at doctorbarnes3@gmail.com or roscoebarnes3@yahoo.com. For

updates on F.F. Bosworth history, simply follow this blog or @RoscoeBarnes3 on Twitter. **#ChristTheHealer**