

## ***Bosworth Matters***

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# **The Passing of Eugene Peterson and F.F. Bosworth**

## **A Look at Their Transition and 'Ultimate Triumph'**

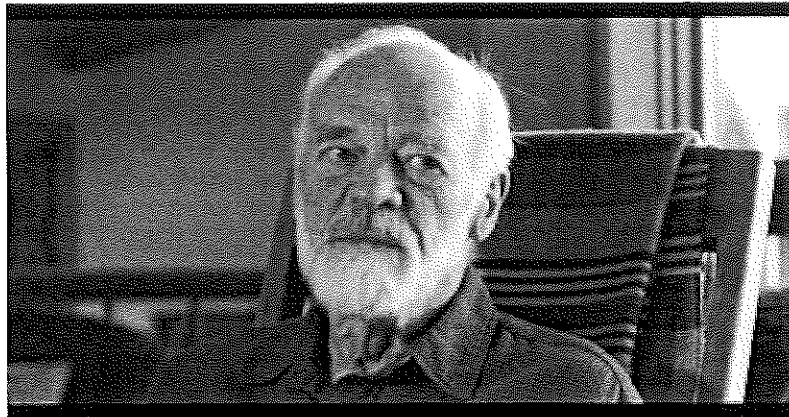
**By Roscoe Barnes III**

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

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**Eugene Peterson**

For students of Pentecostal church history, particularly those who have read *Christ the Healer*, the passing of Eugene Peterson may trigger thoughts about the death of Fred Francis ("F.F.") Bosworth. The reason is that both men reportedly left this life -- and crossed over into Heaven -- in a similar fashion.

Bosworth and Peterson, both of whom died in their 80s, were said to be speaking with people in the afterlife in their final moments. Both men also appeared more than ready to be absent from the body and present with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8). Bosworth's death has been called "the ultimate triumph."

Peterson, a noted theologian and Presbyterian minister, died on October 22, 2018. His cause of death has been listed as congestive heart failure. According to Robert D. McFadden of *The New York Times*, he died at his home in Lakeside, Mont., at the age of 85. He reportedly "had dementia, (and) had been in hospice care," McFadden wrote.

Peterson was famous as the author/translator of *The Message*, which is described as "The Bible in Contemporary Language." It is published by NavPress.

### **Peterson's passing**

In her article, "Eugene Peterson Has Completed His Long Obedience," that appeared in the October 22, 2018 issue of *Christianity Today*, Kate Shellnutt presented a colorful and quite moving tribute to Peterson. She quoted his family as saying he "joyfully looked toward heaven as he neared death, saying, 'Let's go.'"

One fascinating part of Shellnutt's article is the description of Peterson's final moment, which was presented in a statement from Peterson's family:

"During the previous days, it was apparent that he was navigating the thin and sacred space between earth and heaven," they stated. "We overheard him speaking to people we can only presume were welcoming him into paradise. There may have even been a time or two when he accessed his Pentecostal roots and spoke in tongues as well.

Philip Yancey, best-selling Christian author, wrote a powerful tribute to Peterson that featured a number of personal anecdotes. In his article, "Farewell, Eugene" (*Pathos.com/The Evangelical Pulpit*, October 24, 2018), Yancey included this note about Peterson, which was also shared by the family:

"He is now in his own bedroom with a spectacular view of Flathead Lake. He is comfortable and well-cared for. It appears that he is talking with people that no one else can see. These, I believe, are not hallucinations; rather, he is being prepared for something too glorious for words."

### **Bosworth's passing**

Bosworth's passing was described in a manner similar to the one reported by Peterson's family. The famous healing evangelist died of a heart attack on January 23, 1958, according to news reports. He was 81.

According to his son, Robert V. (Bob) Bosworth, his dad wished to "glorify God in his death as he had in his life." The family came to his bedside just before he passed.

"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."

He did this for several hours. Finally, with a smile on his face, he put his head back and slept.

Robert's wife, Stella, was sitting with him when he took his last breath. Robert said he passed without any pain or struggle.

Several years after F. F. Bosworth's death, William Branham chimed in on his passing. In a sermon titled "Perseverance," Branham talked about his meeting with the elder evangelist a

short time before his transition. Branham, who is simple and unpretentious in his speaking, had known Bosworth since the 1940s, during the early days of The Voice if Healing.

Branham said that when he visited Bosworth, they embraced each other like father and son. When he asked Bosworth if he was sick. Bosworth replied, "No."

"Well, what's the matter?" Branham asked. His question led to an interesting exchange between the two of them. Bosworth reportedly said he was "just going home." Branham, in his usual folksy style, described their conversation as follows:

"Well, Brother Bosworth," I said, "I'd like to ask you something. When was your best time?"

He said, "Right now."

And I said, "Yet you know you're dying?"

He said, "I can't die.... I died about seventy years ago. I'm a new creature in Christ." And he said, "Brother Branham, all that 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."

### Closing thought

Stories like the ones presented in this article are not as rare as some may be inclined to believe. In fact, similar reports have been given about many Christians, including D. L. Moody, who also spoke of seeing his family members in Heaven. When someone questioned his claim and suggested he was dreaming, he corrected them and said "he had actually been within the gates of Heaven," according to biographer J. Wilbur Chapman.

One biblical story that comes to mind appears in Acts 7, where Stephen is being stoned. Before he died, he looked up and saw Christ, who appeared to be welcoming him to Heaven.

When the council members heard Stephen's speech, they were angry and furious. But Stephen was filled with the Holy Spirit. He looked toward heaven, where he saw our glorious God and Jesus standing at his right side. Then Stephen said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right side of God!" (Acts 7:54-56, *Contemporary English Version*)

Reports of dying Christians being welcomed by people on the other side, undoubtedly, will be dismissed by some as nothing more than fantasy, hallucinations, and exaggerations. The dismissal, in some cases, may be warranted. However, the accounts of Peterson and Bosworth deserve attention, as both men were highly respected and not given to foolishness.

Whatever one chooses to believe, there is one thing about Peterson and Bosworth that seems undeniable: Both of them fought a good fight and kept the faith, and they both seemed ready to meet their Lord.

For information on *The Message*, visit the NavPress website located [here](http://www.navpress.com).

**Photo:** The image of Eugene Peterson was taken from the NavPress YouTube video, "Eugene Peterson: The Main Storyline of the Bible" (published October 11, 2016). See video [here](#).

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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](mailto:doctorbarnes3@gmail.com) or [roscoebarnes3@yahoo.com](mailto:roscoebarnes3@yahoo.com). For updates on F.F. Bosworth history, simply follow this blog or @Roscoebarnes3 on Twitter.

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