

Roscoe Reporting

Date: Monday, January 27, 2020

Website: <http://roscoereporting.blogspot.com>

Lester Sumrall's Mention of F.F. Bosworth

He recounts a meeting with the revivalist in 1954

By Roscoe Barnes III, PhD

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

Copyright (c) 2020

#FFBosworth

#BosworthMatters

#LesterSumrall



Dr. Lester Sumrall
(1913 - 1996)

F.F. Bosworth was one of many famous healing revivalists that Lester Sumrall had the pleasure of meeting.

In his book, *Pioneers of Faith* (Harrison House, 1995), Sumrall includes a profile of Bosworth in a chapter titled, "Fred Francis Bosworth: A Man of Humility and Humor (1877-1958)." Sumrall recounts a meeting he had with Bosworth in 1954. It was when Bosworth visited his church in South Bend, Ind. Bosworth, who was in his 70s, was joined by Raymond T. Richey.

"I did not become intimately acquainted with Bosworth on the mission field, but in my own church in South Bend," Sumrall notes. He writes that he was "ecstatic" to have Bosworth and Richey in his church.

As would be expected in a profile, Sumrall chronicles the life story of Bosworth, beginning with his birth in Nebraska. He covers his conversion, his healing of TB, his work with John Alexander Dowie in Zion City, his Spirit baptism, his call to the ministry, and his success as a healing evangelist. Most of what he provides is commonly known. However, he does make some interesting observations about the famous healing evangelist. A few of them are outlined below.

What Sumrall said about Bosworth

First, Sumrall comments on the success of Bosworth's healing ministry. He asserts that Bosworth and Richey "were men who were getting more people healed than any other two people on the face of the earth at that time." This claim, particularly as it relates to Bosworth, might be viewed as hyperbole. However, similar claims about Bosworth have been made by a number of historians and healing revivalists, including Gordon Lindsay.

Second, he describes Bosworth as a team player in his ministry with Richey. The two men "flowed beautifully together in speaking and praying for the sick," according to Sumrall. Richey was a few years younger than Bosworth. In some ways, their work was probably reminiscent of Bosworth's time with his younger brother, B.B. Bosworth. Even so, Bosworth was known throughout his ministry as one who would defer to others by gracefully sharing the platform and spotlight. Sumrall's depiction of him rings true, and it is no surprise that Sumrall describes him and Richey as "quite a team."

Third, he views their ministry as representing two moves of the Spirit. "It was the old and the new moves functioning together," he explains. "Richey came out of the nineteenth-century holiness move, and Bosworth was Pentecostal."

Now this statement, in all honesty, is surprising, if not confusing. Why? Because both men came out of Zion City. Both served with the Assemblies of God and both served with the Christian and Missionary Alliance. Both of them also held successful healing revivals. Given these facts, it seems that Sumrall's comment could use some clarity.

Fourth, he reports on the method of ministry used by Bosworth and Richey. He writes: "Bosworth usually gave testimonies from his past, and Richey laid hands on the people." This first-hand observation lines up with an argument I have made about Bosworth's method of defending divine healing. In the article, "F.F. Bosworth's Defense of Divine Healing: A look at his use of the 'Notable Data Argument' (NDA)," I presented the following:

Whenever F.F. Bosworth was challenged on the topic of divine healing, he used Scripture and divine healing cases/testimonials in what I term the "Notable Data Argument" or NDA (taken from Acts 4:16). I define NDA as the Pentecostal method of proving a point, establishing a supernatural claim -- or supporting a position -- by using trusted experiences that are widely accepted and validated by objective sources, such as medical professionals. The NDA concept, which is based on patterns identified in Bosworth's life history, was inspired by Acts 4:16: "**What shall we do to these men? Because indeed a notable miracle has been done through them, as can be plainly seen by all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we can't deny it**" (*World English Bible*).

Bosworth used healing testimonies in his sermons, books, magazines, newspapers, articles, letters, and in his debates. He also featured them on his radio broadcast. His use of them in Sumrall's church meeting fits a pattern of ministry that is seen throughout his career.

Fifth, he notes the legacy of Bosworth's book, *Christ the Healer* (1924), which he calls a "masterpiece." The book is Bosworth's manifesto on divine healing. It has been used as a textbook for many decades by many well-known healing revivalists. Sumrall adds: "Still available today, this book tells of the great healing power of God and influenced evangelist T.L. Osborn in his worldwide ministry."

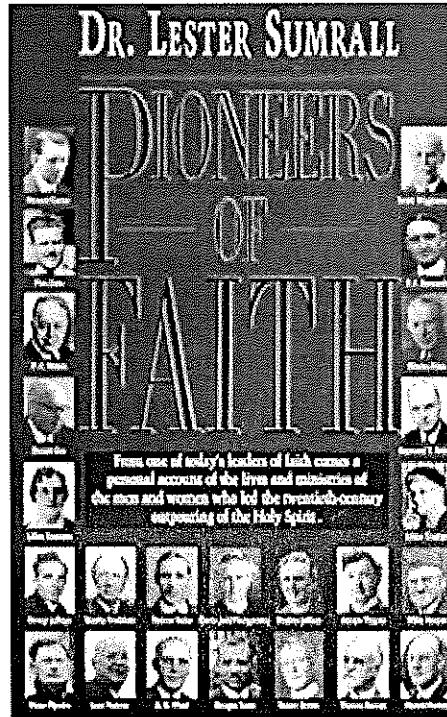
Sixth, Sumrall suggests Bosworth was a man of humor. During Bosworth's presentation, he apparently shared a few stories that made people laugh. One of the stories, according to Sumrall, related to his early years, when he worked as a jack-of-all-trades:

He once said he cooked for twenty-four boarders "and none of them died." His sense of humor helped him stay humble and handle some of the persecution that came his way. When he told the story of his life, some of the highlights were the funny things that happened to him as he tried out these various jobs."

Sumrall's description of Bosworth as a man of humor is the first that I have seen. William Branham recalled some of the amusing comments by Bosworth, and bits of humor can be heard in Bosworth's recorded sermons from the 1950s. Humor and sarcasm can be seen in his debates. But was he actually a man of humor? I suppose it's possible.

Sumrall's profile of Bosworth is an interesting piece of writing and a nice non-scholarly contribution to Pentecostal literature. In addition to Bosworth, he writes about a number of notable leaders in the Pentecostal movement. He includes Howard Carter, P.C. Nelson, Lillian Yeomans, Donald Gee, Carrie Judd Montgomery, Charles Price, and Smith Wigglesworth, among others.

Sumrall's book, according to his publisher, is a collection of stories in which he shares his "personal account of the lives and ministries of the men and women who led the twentieth-century outpouring of the Holy Spirit." It is good to see Bosworth featured among these important leaders and to see how their respective ministries intersected in such an important movement in church history.



Reminder: "F.F. Bosworth History" is now on Twitter. Follow @bosworth_fred

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

Want 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](#). 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 roscoebarne3@yahoo.com. For updates on F.F. Bosworth history, simply follow this blog or @bosworth_fred and @RoscoeBarnes3 on Twitter.
#ChristTheHealer #BosworthMention #BosworthMatters