

F.F. Bosworth in South Africa

A Historical Analysis of His Later Ministry and Healing Methodology

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In 1951, Fred Francis Bosworth (1877-1958) made a trip to South Africa that would prove to be a turning point in his life and ministry. For several months he ministered to massive audiences with Evangelists William Branham and Ern Baxter.²

The author of *Christ the Healer*, Bosworth was considered one of the most successful healing evangelists of his time and a leading authority on divine healing.³ Yet, it was during his visit to South Africa that he reportedly witnessed conversions, healings and miracles on a scale that he had never known. He also ministered to his largest crowd ever.⁴

As a result of those experiences, Bosworth gained new insight into divine healing that resulted in new methods of ministry and a new vision for foreign missions. Despite being 74 years of age, he would spend the rest of his life (six years) visiting foreign countries as a missionary-evangelist.⁵

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² Julius Stadskev, *William Branham: A Prophet Visits South Africa* (Jeffersonville: William Branham Evangelistic Association, 1952).

³ T.L. Osborn, *Healing the Sick and Casting Out Devils* (Tulsa: T.L. Osborn, 1950), 83; Lester Sumrall, *Pioneers of Faith* (Tulsa: Harrison House, 1995), 37; Oral Roberts, "F.F. Bosworth Rejoices Over Robert's Meeting in Miami, Florida," *Healing Waters*, February 1949, 4, The Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, Springfield, Mo.; Gordon Lindsay, "Conversations with Evangelist F.F. Bosworth," *The Voice of Healing*, April 1948, 4, The Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, Springfield, Mo.; Paul G. Chappel, "Healing Movements," in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, by Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee, eds., and Patrick H. Alexander, associate ed. (Grand Rapids: Regency Reference Library, 1988), 368.

⁴ Bob Bosworth, afterword to *Christ the Healer*, by F.F. Bosworth (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1948 and 2000), 245-246.

⁵ *Ibid.*; Sumrall, 44.

This article will focus primarily on the last ten years of Bosworth's life with particular emphasis on his experiences in South Africa in 1951. Its purpose is to show how his healing methodology changed as a result of his new experiences on foreign soil. An understanding of his changes and development in the healing ministry will shed light on the ministry of healing as it relates to missionary-evangelism. This study will also allow the church to know more about the ministry potential of aging Christian workers, and the gospel of healing as a universal message.

Five areas will be considered: 1.) His struggle with aging; 2) His recognition of spiritual gifts; 3.) His use of healings as object lessons; 4.) His discovery of mass faith; 5.) His burden for foreign missions.

1. *His struggle with aging*

At the close of World War II in the mid-1940s, Bosworth was 68 years of age and thought his ministry was over; but a few years later, while in his 70s, he discovered that while growing old can have its limitations, it is not a barrier to fruitful ministry.

By the late 1940s, Bosworth had moved to Florida and retired from active ministry. Because of gas rationing during the war, he found it difficult to travel to meetings. "Yet it was difficult not to be preaching continually," according to his son, Bob Bosworth.⁶

His contemporaries, some of whom were leaders in the divine healing and Pentecostal movements, had passed on. They included: John G. Lake, Smith Wigglesworth, E.W. Kenyon, Aimee Semple McPherson and Charles S. Price, among others.⁷ Their passing meant that Bosworth was one of the last of the Pentecostal pioneers who had made his mark on an earlier generation. Now in semi-retirement, he wondered about his future. Aging, and the limitations that come with it, was something he did not appreciate. His son, Bosworth, noted: "There was a period of frustration. Was his ministry over? Had he run his course? He did not believe in the worldly doctrine retirement. What was he to do?"⁸

⁶ Bob Bosworth, 245.

⁷ Osborn, 240.

⁸ Bob Bosworth, 245.

The answer to those questions came in 1948 when Bosworth began working with Evangelist William Branham. He served as a teacher, advisor and mentor.⁹ Again, Bosworth's son noted:

"God raised up a healing revival following the war. Many evangelists were raised up who needed the experience and wisdom of a mentor. He again began to teach the truths he knew, and found great satisfaction."¹⁰

Bosworth's new lease in ministry began in early 1948 in Miami, Fla., where William Branham was holding an evangelistic healing campaign. Bosworth attended some of the services and was astounded at the miraculous healings that took place, especially those that occurred on the first night. He met with Branham and was invited to speak at one of the services. According to Gordon Lindsay, when the two first met, it was mutual love and respect at first sight. Bosworth later found it possible to join Branham's ministry.¹¹ Owen Jorgensen, author of *Supernatural: The Life of William Branham*, gave a colorful report of how Bosworth joined the Branham party. He said it happened after a long, friendly conversation between the two men. He wrote:

Suddenly Fred Bosworth forgot about his retirement. "Brother Branham, would you have a use for my expertise? I would love to travel with you and help you out wherever I could."

"Brother Bosworth, I would be honored to have your company. I've been praying about getting a manager."

Leaving the hotel, they strolled along the beach..." Bill noticed a spring in Fred Bosworth's step, so different from his own dragging footsteps. Bill felt exhausted, even though he had slept well into the day. It seemed like he could barely lift his feet out of the sand. He asked, "Brother Bosworth, how old are you?"

"Seventy-one."

"When were you at your best?"

⁹ Lindsay, "Rev. and Mrs. F.F. Bosworth Work With Branham Party," *The Voice of Healing*, May 1948, 1, 5. The Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, Springfield, Mo.

¹⁰ Bob Bosworth, 245.

¹¹ Lindsay, *The Voice of Healing*, May 1948, 5.

"Right now, Brother Branham. I'm just a kid living in an old house."¹²

After Bosworth had officially joined Branham's ministry, Gordon Lindsay, editor of *The Voice of Healing*, wrote an article that mentioned the evangelist's role. He noted:

Brother Bosworth has reached the age where he, though in striking health for a man of his age, is nevertheless unable to carry on the responsibility of great campaigns himself. However, he still is able to minister the Word of God in incomparable fashion, and give the party the benefit of his many years of experience.¹³

Over time, however, Bosworth would engage in ministerial duties that went far beyond those mentioned by Lindsay. For instance, in the May 1949 issue of *The Voice of Healing*, Thomas H. Nelson, president of the National Bible Academy, described Bosworth's ministry with Branham during meetings at Grace Missionary Church of Zion, Ill., in April of that year. Besides carrying a full teaching schedule, Bosworth also prayed directly for the sick., Nelson reported:

Four days before Brother Branham arrived, Brother Bosworth taught every afternoon and evening from the Bible in crystal-clear language and in unmistakable terms, showing God's way of salvation and healing, through Christ's death on the cross. Those services laid a good foundation of faith for the meetings to follow.¹⁴

When Branham arrived, he would often minister for hours and become so exhausted, he would be physically carried off the platform. Whenever that happened, Bosworth would step in. "Often after Brother Branham had gone, Brother Bosworth would remain and pray for the sick until long after midnight," wrote Nelson.¹⁵

When a critic challenged Branham to a public debate on divine healing during a January 1950 campaign in Houston, Texas, Bosworth accepted the

¹² Owen Jorgensen, *Supernatural: The Life of William Branham, Book Three: The Man and His Commission (1946-1950)* (Tucson: Tucson Tabernacle, 1994), 96-97.

¹³ Lindsay, *The Voice of Healing*, May 1948, 5.

¹⁴ Thomas H. Nelson, "Dowie's Followers Relive Glorious Days of Past as Branham and Bosworth Minister in Zion," *The Voice of Healing*, May 1949, 1. The Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, Springfield, Mo.

¹⁵ Ibid.

challenge and made national news, including the headlines in local newspapers.

Bosworth's ministry with Branham also led to associations with other young evangelists, including T.L. Osborn, Oral Roberts, and tent preachers affiliated with the Voice of Healing organization. Bosworth's teaching on divine healing would become a model for the revivalists of the 1940s and 1950s.¹⁶ However, his work with Branham would prove to be important for a number of other reasons. Besides giving him a platform for future ministry, the association allowed him to discover new methods of ministry, including the work of missionary-evangelism on foreign soil.

2. His recognition of spiritual gifts

For over four decades, Bosworth had preached that faith for healing comes by hearing the Word of God and by doing the will of God.¹⁷ He emphasized the need to understand the will of God on the matter and the need to see healing as a part of salvation. But when he began working with Evangelist William Branham, his belief and healing methodology underwent a change that linked faith to the gift of healing. While he continued to hold to his earlier beliefs, and he often said that a person could be healed without the gift of healing, he extended his belief system with a new method that encouraged the sick to pray for faith.

Bosworth came to believe that the gift of healing operates at a certain level of faith. In order for a sick person to be healed, his or her faith has to rise to that level and draw on the power of the gift. To make that happen, the sick

¹⁶ Dale H. Simmons, *E.W. Kenyon and the Postbellum Pursuit of Peace, Power, and Plenty: Studies in Evangelicalism, No. 13* (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, 1997), 295; C. Douglas Weaver, *The Healer-Prophet, William Marrion Branham: A Study of the Prophetic in American Pentecostalism* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2000), 67; Chappell, "Healing Movements," 368; Andrew Perriman, ed., *Faith, Health and Prosperity: A Report on 'Word of Faith' and 'Positive Confession' Theologies by The Evangelical Alliance (UK) Commission on Unity and Truth among Evangelicals* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press, 2003), 63; Douglas Jacobson, *Thinking in the Spirit: Theologies of the Early Pentecostal Movement* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 294.

¹⁷ F.F. Bosworth, "The Wonders of Faith: How to Receive the Faith of God," *The Latter Rain Evangel*, June 1913, 7, 10. The Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, Springfield, Mo.

could simply ask God to raise their faith to the required level so they could be healed.¹⁸

But why the change? Why did Bosworth see the need to adapt and add a new method of ministry? The answers lie in the ministry of Evangelist William Branham.

When Branham burst onto the scene in the late 1940s, he mesmerized audiences with an amazing gift of healing that included the supernatural ability to diagnose sickness and diseases. Branham's ministry appeared as something new, different and very dramatic. His biographer, Gordon Lindsay, attended one of his meetings and wrote:

Certainly the service that we witnessed that night was different than any we had ever been in before. Never had we known of any preacher calling deaf mutes and blind people to pray for, and then to see those people delivered on the spot.¹⁹

Lindsay had worked with the likes of John G. Lake and had reportedly witnessed, and heard about, many miracles of healing.²⁰ However, he concluded that Branham "had reached out into God and received a ministry that was beyond any that we had witnessed before."²¹

Like others who believed in Branham's gift, Bosworth was also amazed. On one occasion he said: "I have never seen or read of anything to equal the healing ministry of William Branham."²² On another occasion, he said: "Let me say a few words about the gift that Brother Branham has received. I've thanked God thousands of times for that. I've seen the same results for many, many years, but not in that particular way."²³

Those comments are especially significant when one considers what Bosworth said of Maria Woodworth-Etter. He wrote:

¹⁸ F.F. Bosworth, "Mass Faith," [audio sermon] Chicago, 21 July 1954. The Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, Springfield, Mo.

¹⁹ Lindsay, in collaboration with William Branham, *William Branham: A Man Sent From God* (Jeffersonville: William Branham, n.d.), 116.

²⁰ Lindsay, editor, *John G. Lake -- Apostle to Africa* (Dallas: Christ for the Nations Inc., 2006)

²¹ Lindsay and Branham, 116.

²² Ibid. 169.

²³ F.F. Bosworth, "Mass Faith."

"I wish all the saints in the Pentecostal movement had a copy of Sister Etter's book. It is such a help to faith! There has been no such record written since the 'Acts of the Apostles' recording such continuous victories by the Lord in our day over sin and sickness, as this book."²⁴

Apparently, in Bosworth's thinking, Branham's ministry surpassed even the works of Woodworth-Etter, including other great leaders Bosworth had known. Bosworth likened Branham's ministry to the ministry of Christ in Luke 8:46, where a woman was healed by the touch of His garment. Jesus said: "I perceive that virtue is gone out of me." In Branham's case, Bosworth explained it this way:

The two sign miracles which God manifests through Brother Branham to raise the faith of those in the healing line to the right level, are given also to raise the faith of the afflicted in the audience to the same level. This faith draws the same virtue from the in-dwelling Christ Who is operating the gift, and heals those sitting in the audience.²⁵

In recognition of Branham's gift, Bosworth and his wife, Florence N. Bosworth, began to do something that was uncharacteristic of them: They told the sick to pray for faith. At a meeting in Fort Wayne, Ind., Bosworth's wife advised a young lady with crossed eyes to "ask God to lift your faith to the healing level, and you will pull from the gift the healing virtue (in Branham)." The lady did as she was told and later on, Branham pointed her out in the audience and said she was healed.²⁶

While ministering in South Africa in 1951, Bosworth advised a man "to be in constant prayer that God would give Brother Branham a vision of his child who was suffering from cancer." When the man attended the service where Branham was ministering, Branham recognized the man and said, "Go home; if you can believe, your child who is at home suffering with cancer will be well."²⁷

²⁴ Maria Woodworth-Etter, *A Diary of Signs & Wonders: A Classic* (Tulsa: Harrison House, 1916), 160.

²⁵ Lindsay and Branham, 175.

²⁶ Stadskev, 44; Also referenced in "Experience as a Catalyst for Healing Ministry: Historical Evidence and Implications from the Life of F.F. Bosworth," by Roscoe Barnes III, 2007 conference paper for the Society for Pentecostal Studies.

²⁷ Ibid. 86-87; Also referenced in "Experience as a Catalyst for Healing Ministry: Historical Evidence and Implications from the Life of F.F. Bosworth," by Roscoe Barnes III, 2007 conference paper for the Society for Pentecostal Studies.

This new method of ministry was not merely a passing, coincidental practice for Bosworth. Instead, it became a part of his ministry repertoire. I was something that he did "hundreds of times."²⁸

3. *His use of healings as object lessons*

In addition to linking faith to the faith level of a spiritual gift, Bosworth adopted another feature in his healing ministry that was used to enhance the clarity of his preaching, and thereby generate faith for healing: He began praying for dramatic healings as object lessons. Explaining the concept, he once said:

"I told my son... I'm gonna put myself in jeopardy and make a fool of myself if God doesn't see me through, by asking God to confirm every message I preach with a visible miracle or two, the kind of miracles that can be seen."²⁹

The use of healing as an object lesson was not a foreign concept to Bosworth, as he often preached that healings and miracles confirmed the Word. He even suggested such in his first published article entitled, "Confirming the Word by Signs Following" (*The Latter Rain Evangel*). The method was well publicized by other healing evangelists, including John G. Lake, Bosworth's contemporary. On one occasion, Lake said:

We do not preach Divine Healing. It is not worth while. We say to the sick people, 'Come up on the platform and get it.' Brother, one man healed in the sight of your audience beats all the sermons that ever you preached in convincing proof in power of the gospel of the Son of God, and the reality of the power of the blood of Jesus Christ.³⁰

Unlike Lake, however, Bosworth typically began his healing services by teaching. He would then commence to illustrate his message by praying for only one or two people with physical ailments. Once they were healed, he would point to them as proof of what faith in God will do. Then he would pray for others who were sick.

²⁸ F.F. Bosworth, "Mass Faith."

²⁹ F.F. Bosworth, "Christian Confession" [audio sermon] Chicago, 23 July 1954. The Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, Springfield, Mo.

³⁰ John G. Lake, *The Bridegroom's Messenger*, 2.29, 1 January 1909, 4, in *Pentecostal Healing: Models in Theology and Practice*, by Kimberly Ervin Alexander (Dorset (UK): Deo Publishing, 2006), 94.

When Bosworth started working with William Branham, he began to use the method in what appears to be a more dramatic fashion. Though he had used "object lessons" in the past, he had never used them in relation with the gifts of healing as seen in Branham's ministry. In an article in which he describes Branham's ministry, he wrote:

Just as an altar-call or invitation to sinners follows an evangelistic sermon, so after the supernatural diagnosing and healing of those in the healing line, the invitation is now being given to those in the audience who are prepared to receive healing to come or be carried forward to be healed or saved. The healing of one at a time on the platform is only preliminary to the main healing service. It is only an object lesson sermon, so to speak, to all in the audience who need the benefits of the healing part of the gospel.³¹

In South Africa, the "object lesson" would be taken to a new level and often demonstrated without the presence of Branham and his gifts. Such is indicated by a report on one of Bosworth's meetings in Durban, where he ministered to an audience of 75,000 in the Greyville Race Course arena.³²

According to author Julius Stadsklev, Bosworth had been teaching on divine healing and how it is received by faith in Christ; but he needed an object lesson to make his point clear. So he called for three people who were deaf in one ear -- people who had had a radical mastoid operation. Those people, he said, would have heard him preach the Gospel. Next, he called for a person who was deaf in both ears.

Bosworth prayed for all four people. When he tested their hearing, only the three who were deaf in one ear were healed: The fourth person, deaf in both ears, was not.

For Bosworth and his team, the healings proved that faith for healing comes by faith in the Word of God, and faith comes by hearing the Word.

³¹ Lindsay and Branham, 178.

³² Stadsklev, 120-121; Bob Bosworth, 245; W. F. Mullan, Assemblies of God Chairman, put the attendance at 40,000 to 45,000. Mullan, "South Africa Moved by Branham Visit," in *The William Branham Sermons: How God Called Me To Africa and Other Sermons*, by Gordon Lindsay, ed. (Dallas: The Voice of Healing Publishing Co., n.d.), 130; Evang. Robert Thom put the number at 60,000. Thom, *You and Your Ministry: William Branham, Prophet Or?* (South Africa: Evang. Robert Thom, n.d.), 76.

The three people who were healed had heard the Word; but the person who was not healed had not heard the message or the promises of God and therefore had no faith for healing.³³

That public demonstration of God's healing power in 1951 was a compelling moment for Bosworth and the people he taught in South Africa. For Bosworth, it was one of the clearest illustrations of the truth that faith for healing comes by hearing the Word of God. Because of his success in using healing as object lessons, the method became a key feature of his future ministry.

During his 1954 meeting in Chicago, he explained that he had prayed for healings as object lessons and that God had granted his request. The following year, in August 1955, Bosworth joined William Branham for meetings in Germany and Switzerland. As in South Africa, healing was used as object lessons to confirm the Gospel, as well as a tool to inspire faith. In writing about one of their meetings, Bosworth reported:

In order to help raise the faith of the people in the afternoon services for the ministry of Brother Branham in the night healing services, I usually asked God to confirm my messages with two or three visible miracles such as the healing of totally deaf ears. This he did. Some of these who had ears destroyed by radical mastoid operations were healed instantly."³⁴

4. *His discovery of mass faith and mass healing*

Given Bosworth's years of experience and depth of knowledge about divine healing, one would think that he had all the answers on the topic and that he had gone as far as one could go, in terms of healing methodology. However, in South Africa he discovered another form of ministry known as "healing *en masse*," and he often used it during the main healing service, which followed the healings as object lessons. In short, he found that mass faith, when possessed by massive audiences, could instantly produce mass healings of biblical proportions, all without individual prayers or the laying on of hands.

³³ Stadsklev, 121-126.

³⁴ F.F. Bosworth, "Report of the Branham Meeting in Germany," *The Voice of Healing*, October 1955, 17. The Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, Springfield, Mo.

"Healing *en masse*" is a method that originated with T.L. Osborn, who once served as Bosworth's protégé. In his book, *Healing en Masse*, Osborn defined the method as follows:

Mass faith and mass healing means that a mass of people believe the same truths at the same time; that they all accept it and act upon it simultaneously. That is when healing *en masse* results.³⁵

Bosworth had talked about the need for such a method as early as 1949. In fact, he shared his views with Osborn during evangelistic meetings in Flint, Michigan. At the time, Osborn was filling in for Branham who could not attend the meeting. Osborn recalled:

He was concerned about suffering people who waited in long prayer-lines for someone's special prayer when they could embrace God's healing promises as soon as they heard them and be healed. He often discussed this with us....

For some mysterious reason, God chose Mr. Bosworth to seed us with these and many other biblical reasons for faith to help multitudes to be healed at the same time. We had no way of knowing that we would face teeming multitudes of sick people in mass crusades all over the world. *God was using this dear old veteran of the healing ministry to prepare our young hearts for greater and more vast healing ministry than had ever been experienced in the history of humankind.*³⁶

It seems then, that while the *practice* of healing *en masse* was first used, and indeed, popularized, by Osborn, the *concept* actually originated with Bosworth.

Before his trip to Africa, Bosworth's healing methodology consisted primarily of teaching the Word (to build faith), prayer cards, long healing lines, prayer cloths, anointing of oil and prayer for people on an individual level.³⁷ However, in Africa he faced a dilemma: He had many thousands of

³⁵ Osborn, *Healing en Masse* (Tulsa: T.L. Osborn, 1958), 35; Harrell, 66, 87

³⁶ Osborn, "How Big Is 'Possible'?" T.L. Osborn Recounts One of His Life-Changing Experiences," *Faith Digest*, May 1949, 3, 4.

³⁷ Prayer cards were used primarily "to maintain order in a large meeting." Lindsay, *God's 20th Century Barnabas* (Dallas: Christ For The Nations Inc., 1982), 184; Harrell, 86. Although Bosworth continued to use prayer cards in the United States following his trip to South Africa, he frequently told audiences about

people who were sick. The size of the audience made it impossible for him to offer individual prayers.

That dilemma prompted him to begin praying for the sick *en masse*. He reported:

"In Africa there were thousands healed by being taught and ... praying a prayer that we gave the words for. ... In one place, sixty-six blind eyes were open; and I never saw one and never touched one."³⁸

Bosworth came to believe that mass faith produces mass results and that it is much easier to pray a single prayer for large groups of people needing healing, than it is to pray for them individually. In a sermon titled, "Mass Faith," he said:

Because of the cumulative power of mass faith, it's much easier for a whole audience, if they need to be healed at one time, than it is the same number one at a time. I wish I'd known that a few years ago; I wouldn't have worked half so hard. ... The greater the crowd, the easier it is. I always thought we always had to stop and cast out demons in Christ name. No sir. You get mass faith; the demon goes. He can't stand it. It's like throwing a tear bomb.³⁹

Bosworth believed that healing *en masse*, combined with healing as an object lesson, was a restoration of Bible truth. It is a restoration of "an old technique," he often said.⁴⁰ He supported his view with such Scriptures as Rom 15:18, 19: "For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to win obedience from the Gentiles, by word and deed, by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and as far around as Illyricum I have fully proclaimed the good news of Christ."

So while it is possible that he first *witnessed* "healing *en masse*" through T.L. Osborn in 1949 in Flint, Mich., it was in South Africa that Bosworth first *applied* the method in his own ministry.

healing through "mass faith" and reminded them that they could be healed without prayer cards and gifts of healing. Bosworth, "Christian Confession."

³⁸ F.F. Bosworth, "Mass Faith."

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ F. F. Bosworth, "Christian Confession."

5. His burden for foreign missions.

Beyond his discovery of new healing methods, including the chance to preach to some of the largest audiences of his career, Bosworth's visit to South Africa also resulted in a new direction for his ministry: He discovered a compassionate calling as a missionary-evangelist, a calling that would lead him to spend the rest of his life (six years) ministering in foreign countries.

Bosworth, it should be noted, had never been unaware of the needs in other countries. After all, his closest friends and relatives had served as missionaries. For over 20 years, his publication, *Exploits of Faith*, featured reports from the mission fields. Additionally, his friend, John G. Lake, known as the "Apostle to Africa," often talked about his own ministry and the miracles he witnessed on foreign soil.⁴¹ So even though Bosworth knew about mission work, he had not personally held evangelistic meetings outside the United States and Canada.⁴² It was his time in South Africa that allowed him to see the needs of the masses up close, and on a personal level.

Despite his age, Bosworth carried a full schedule and worked steadily during the South African meetings. In Pretoria, for instance, he preached three and four times a day.⁴³ Pastor A.H. Cooper, who served as chairman of the South African meetings, described the elderly evangelist as an "Apostle of Faith" who played an important part in each campaign. He reported:

Again and again, under his ministry we saw deaf spirits cast out and eardrums recreated. No case of sickness daunted the enthusiastic faith

⁴¹ Lindsay, editor, *John G. Lake -- Apostle to Africa* (Dallas: Christ for the Nations Inc., 2006); Gordon P. Gardiner, *Out of Zion Into All the World* (Shippensburg; Companion Press, 1990), xi; "Message From Old Friends, Formerly With The Bosworth Party, Now in India," *Exploits of Faith*, March 1929, 17, The Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, Springfield, Mo.; "Some of the Experiences of Our Old Friends: Miss Erma Valentine and Miss Eva Edwards and Their Bible Woman in India," *Exploits of Faith*, April 1930, 5, The Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, Springfield, Mo.; David J. du Plessis, "Golden Jubilees of Twentieth-Century Pentecostal Movements," in *Azusa Street and Beyond: Pentecostal Missions and Church Growth in the Twentieth Century*, by L. Grant McClung Jr., ed. (South Plainfield: Bridge Publishing Inc., 1986), 40.

⁴² Osborn, *Faith Digest*, May 1949, 2.

⁴³ Stadsklev, 140.

of this veteran warrior. He labored unceasingly and we certainly learned to love him.⁴⁴

Cooper's view coincided with the thoughts of Pastor John F. Woderson, who described Bosworth as a "20th century pioneer of the ministry of the miraculous." Woderson said that Bosworth's teaching on divine healing "inspired and established the faith of many." He added: "His undaunted faith in prayer for deaf mutes and the results which followed became an incentive to thousands to trust God for their healing."⁴⁵

All together, the experiences left an indelible impression on Bosworth, so much so, that he felt compelled to enter a new phase of his life and ministry. His son observed:

This was the first time that Fred Bosworth had ever experienced the spiritual hunger of what had been termed "the third world." For almost fifty years he had poured out his life in North America, a place that had become resistant to the Gospel. He asked the Lord to not allow him to continue ministering in America.⁴⁶

Following his trip to South Africa, Bosworth became so passionate about missions that he would choke up whenever he spoke about the subject. He often became overwhelmed with a longing to share the gospel with the people who had never heard it. In 1954, when he spoke about an upcoming trip to Japan, he suggested the needs of the country made his heart ache, and that he couldn't think about the people without crying.⁴⁷

He apparently came to agree with T.L. Osborn, who said, "No one should hear the gospel twice until everyone has heard it once."⁴⁸ With that view in mind, fired by a burning passion to reach people in other nations, Bosworth dedicated his life to missionary work in Africa. He and William Branham

⁴⁴ Ibid. 130.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 136.

⁴⁶ Bob Bosworth, 246.

⁴⁷ F.F. Bosworth, "Christian Confession"; After his first visit to South Africa with William Branham, Bosworth said he "had such a craving and such a yearning, I had to go back." He could hardly think about the people without weeping. He said: "You're a different person if you ever go to Africa or some place outside the United States. I have to keep my mind off those poor souls or I'll be weeping all the time." F.F. Bosworth, "Redemptive Blessings," [audio sermon] Chicago, 22 July 1954, The Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, Springfield, Mo.

⁴⁸ Osborn, *Soulwinning: Out Where the Sinners Are* (Tulsa: T.L. Osborn Evangelistic Association, 1967), 88, 94.

also traveled to Germany, Switzerland and Cuba.⁴⁹ In January 1958, after a trip to Japan, he returned to his home in Miami, Fla., and announced that his work for God was done and that God was calling him home. He died on Jan. 23, 1958, six days after his birthday, at the age of 81.⁵⁰

Conclusion and Implications

This article has dealt with the last 10 years of Bosworth's life. It has shown how he continued to learn and grow as a healing evangelist, despite his status as a senior citizen. The changes he made in his belief system and healing methodology as a result of his experiences in South Africa have a number of implications for today's Pentecostal church:

1. First, his experiences may serve as a reminder of the universality of the gospel. They reinforce the view that the gospel is a global message that produces the same results wherever it is believed.⁵¹ If it works in one place, it should work in another. What Bosworth saw in the United States and Canada for over 40 years, he also witnessed in South Africa, but on a larger scale.
2. Second, his experiences show that divine healing is a diversified phenomenon, and an ever-learning process, that can supersede one's theology and traditional beliefs.
3. Third, his experiences suggest that success in ministry may sometimes require risks, flexibility or the willingness to adapt to specific audiences. That supports the view of Billy Graham who once said that while the message should not change over time, its methods of delivery may indeed change to fit a particular audience.⁵² Such was the case with Bosworth in South Africa.

As the years progressed with Bosworth and Branham, the two remained close friends and ministry partners. It is well documented that as Bosworth

⁴⁹ Sumrall, 44.

⁵⁰ Bob Bosworth, 246-247; David J. du Plessis, "News Briefs: A Faithful Pioneer Passes," *World-Wide Revival*, April 1958, 10. The Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, Springfield, Mo.

⁵¹ Christiaan De Wet, "The Challenge of Signs and Wonders in World Missions for the Twentieth Century," in McClung, 161.

⁵² Billy Graham, *A Biblical Standard For Evangelists: A commentary on the fifteen Affirmations made by participants at the International Conference for Itinerant Evangelists in Amsterdam, The Netherlands - July 1983* (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1984), 6, 12-13.

grew older, he enjoyed success as an evangelist; but Branham, to the surprise of many, became more controversial. Toward the late 1950s, many of Branham's supporters began to distance themselves from him as he started to teach doctrines that were outside mainstream Christianity.⁵³ Bosworth, however, remained a supporter of his ministry until the end.⁵⁴

What is not known is the reason for their bond. What was it that cemented their relationship? Why did Bosworth stand by his side when so many were turning away? It is obvious that Bosworth did not agree with Branham's new doctrines, but there is a lack of research on how he dealt with the issue. Perhaps researchers will take another look at Bosworth's life history, and make an analysis of the final 10 years of his life and his personal relationship with this unusual leader of the post-World War II revival.

(Editorial note: While this research is historical in intention, it sets a stage for research into the theological foundations of the different healing ministries referenced.)

⁵³ Paul L. King, *Genuine Gold: The Cautiously Charismatic Story of the Early Christian and Missionary Alliance* (Tulsa: Word & Spirit Press, 2006), 242, 248; Thom, 76-94; David Edwin Harrell Jr., *All Things Are Possible: The Healing and Charismatic Revivals in Modern America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975), 163.

⁵⁴ William Branham, "Questions and Answers on Hebrews #2, sermon tape 57-1002, 2 October 1957. Available at: <http://www.spokenwordchurch.com/books/qaheb2.html>