

Oral Roberts and Lester Sumrall Led a Generation to Salvation Through Healing

Oral Roberts was near death from tuberculosis when his brother, Robert, took him to be healed. While on the way to the healing service, Robert told him God spoke to him and said Oral would be healed.

The Lord also told Robert Oral would be raised up to build a great university and was to take God's healing power to his generation.

In a recent *Greenelines* podcast with Roberts Liardon about his book, *God's Generals: The Healing Evangelists*, he shared stories about Oral Roberts, Lester Sumrall, F.F. Bosworth, George Jeffreys, and Charles and Frances Hunter about their leadership and ministries as healing evangelists. But each of these ministries offered a much larger footprint.

"I call them the healing evangelists," Liardon said. "They used healing to help people get saved. The old-timers called healing 'the dinner bell to salvation.' Healing and miracles brought people to get saved. That should still be the underlying heart motive. We are always happy to see a sick person made well, but the fruit of the healing should be salvation or returning back. The people I write about didn't have a goal to be popular. They did ministry for Jesus. The ministries just happened to get big," he said.

The healing evangelists did not see immediate results in the early days of their ministries. "Most of the healing preachers, when you talk to them or talk to their families, you will hear that a lot of the folks they prayed for in the beginning didn't get healed. Evangelists had to learn how to flow in the rhythm of God and the faith," he said. "There had

to come a river inside of them or a flow. And when it started happening, it was clear Roberts had a gift. God gave him a gift in his right hand. I always used to ask him about his left hand, and Oral said, 'The left hand ain't got nothing.'

Lester Sumrall was a contemporary of Roberts. Liardon called Sumrall his spiritual father.

"I got to know Brother Sumrall the last 10 to 15 years of his life in his last aspect of this episodic ministry," Liardon said. "I wasn't there when he was pioneering missions or building the buildings or behind the TV stations. I met him when he was wanting to give what he knew to the next generation. So, it was a perfect mix. Perfect. And so, I had him three or four times a year at my church, and we'd be in conferences together.

"And Brother Sumrall is a little different personality than Roberts. They were both good friends, and they loved God, but they're two different personalities. Brother Sumrall was a little rough. I think it's maybe because he said he was Irish, and he talked like that. And I think he received the blessing from Wigglesworth, which Wigglesworth was kind of an abrupt person," he said.

Liardon compared Sumrall to Smith Wigglesworth. "When you saw Brother Sumrall in the prayer line, if you knew what to watch for, you could see a glimpse of that deposit come out of him. And you would see a Wigglesworth kind of moment," he said.

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