

Billy Wilson Discusses New Role as ORU President

Charisma News: When will you take office?

Wilson: I'm scheduled to begin July 1. Dr. Rutland will continue as president until that time. I will be president elect and assume full responsibility July 1.

Charisma News: What vision will you forge for the future of ORU?

Wilson: Of course the history of ORU is a wonderful history. Students from Oral Roberts University are impacting the world literally on every continent. I am incredibly humbled and honored to be asked to serve as the next president. We are very excited about the future. One of the things that God is leading us toward is a further internationalization and globalization of ORU's work. Oral's vision in starting the university was that his students would ultimately go to the uttermost bounds of the earth. There is a great opportunity globally to train leaders to equip marketplace individuals to make an impact for Christ. We see that as one of the great horizons ahead. ORU will soon celebrate its 50th anniversary and we think this is going to be a great moment to not only reflect on the past and celebrate what God has done, but really look to the horizon to see what things God would have us do in the days ahead.

Charisma News: What are your personal feelings stepping into this position, following Dr. Mark Rutland and, of course, Oral Roberts?

Wilson: No one in the world could ever fill Oral Roberts' shoes or really even Dr. Rutland's. Mark Rutland has done a fabulous job for this university at very critical time and we

honor him very highly for his work. I am grateful to God and I am looking forward to this challenge. It is a significant challenge, but we're very excited about the future and to say I'm honored and humbled is a bit of an understatement. I've been a bit overwhelmed the last few days as I reflected on what all of this means for my life and ministry. I don't feel worthy in many ways by accepting this task, except by God's grace. A lot of prayer has gone on and I'm going to need a lot of prayer and His strength going forward. At the same time, we can do all things through Christ, which strengthens us. Oral had a saying on his desk—make no little plans here. This is really the drive of my life. I love to dream big, and I believe ORU gives us that possibility and capability to dream big for the future.

Charisma News: What do you plan to tell the students at ORU?

Wilson: I'm going to tell them some of what I have just described. The fact that God has opened a whole new horizon and vista in my life, and I do feel called of God to do this. It's been a process over the last few months, especially these past few weeks of bringing me to the point of saying yes to this. I'm also going to share with them that I hope to begin my service here at ORU by listening and praying. We will begin a president-elect listening tour, first on campus with our faculty and staff and students. And then, we'll extend that to alumni around the world, listening to their views of what ORU is, and what they are sensing God is saying. Lisa and I have made a commitment right off the bat to pray for every student associated with ORU by name and ask God to give us a heart for this student body that I know He has. ORU is a Christian university. The great distinction of Jesus is that He is the least of all and the servant of all. As ORU leads in the Spirit-empowered movement, we want to be a servant to this movement. God is calling us to serve. My prayer is that ORU will have a servant mentality and a servant heart. I want us to serve our community and our world at large, and I

especially want us to serve the Spirit-empowered movement in a way that enhances all the ministries we touch around the world.

Charisma News: You've been a networker with your years of ministry experience. What is a unique quality you have that lends itself to running this university?

Wilson: I believe in the 21st century, relationship is key to any leadership paradigm. I'm grateful for the relationships God has given me over the last several years, especially in the spirit of our community around the world. We're going to continue those relationships. We are grateful that the International Center for Spiritual Renewal Board has requested Empower 21 be assumed by ORU. It began here a few years ago. That initiative, Empower 21, will be returning to ORU. We'll continue to network with leaders around the world and of course, among our leadership team here in Tulsa, we're delighted. We have a brilliant leadership team, a brilliant faculty and seeing them connect, intersect and dream together is going to be a delight of my journey.

Charisma News: Today's college students are vastly different from what they were 10 years ago. You've seen that trend, so how do you think that's going to benefit your leadership at ORU?

Wilson: Two or three things: Number one, this generation is brilliant. Their potential to impact the world for Christ is beyond any generation in the history of the world. Because of that, there is great spiritual warfare and great attack on them. I'm looking forward to seeing that brilliance shine and these young men and women shine. We have wonderful students at ORU and we're looking for more around the world. This generation is really hungry for authenticity. I think the message of servanthood, of making our lives count in an intangible way, coincides so wonderfully with ORU's mission and vision of taking God's healing power to the world and

going into every man's world for Christ. I believe we'll see that develop in the students. One of the cries we hear around the world that I consistently hear in this generation is for spiritual fathers and mothers. For a connection with generations beyond themselves. I'm really looking forward to connecting personally with these students; loving them, sharing with them, listening to them. We're also hoping that others will join us and adopt our student body at ORU and love them, be mentors to them, and see a whole new generation rise that really can shake the earth.

Charisma News: What kind of exchanges have you had with Dr. Rutland in the last couple of days?

Wilson: We met briefly. We just finished with a meeting with the ORU board of trustees. Dr. Rutland and I are planning a series of meetings in the days ahead. He's been gracious; he's been a statesman, a wonderful gentleman. I'm looking forward to that time of transition. He has a wealth of knowledge. I'm going to be probing that, of course. [There is] so much giftedness in his life. So, I'm grateful for that relationship. We have been friends up until this time and that will continue to be a real blessing to me in this transition.