

ORU Names Billy Wilson as Fourth President

Oral Roberts University (ORU) has named William “Billy” Wilson, 54, as its fourth president. ORU is announcing the successor to Mark Rutland at a press conferencing happening right now at the Tulsa, Okla., campus.

Charisma News caught up with Wilson just hours before the official announcement to discuss his vision for ORU in an exclusive interview. ([Click here to read the entire conversation with Wilson.](#))

“To say I’m honored and humbled is really an understatement,” Wilson said. “I’ve been a bit overwhelmed the last few days as I’ve reflected on all this means for my life and ministry. I don’t feel worthy in many ways of doing this task except by God’s grace. A lot of prayer’s gone on up to this point, 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 who strengthens us.”

Wilson is recognized as a global influencer with unwavering ethics and strong business acumen, who has a passion for building Spirit-empowered leaders to impact the world. He currently serves as executive director of the International Center for Spiritual Renewal in Cleveland, Tenn. He has forged national ecumenical coalitions with more than 250 denominations and parachurch ministries through the Awakening America Alliance.

“One of the things we feel God is leading us toward is a further globalization of ORU’s work,” Wilson said. “Oral’s vision in starting the university was that students would ultimately go to the uttermost bounds of the earth. There is a great opportunity globally to train leaders and equip

marketplace leaders to make an impact for Christ—and we see that as one of the great horizons ahead.”

Wilson is no stranger to ORU. He was recently elected to the ORU Board of Trustees, where he serves as vice-chair. He also serves on numerous other boards and committees, including the Mission America Coalition (Lausanne USA) facilitation committee and the Pentecostal World Fellowship advisory board. He will take the presidential reins from Rutland on July 1.

“The presidential search committee, Board of Trustees and I are confident we have found the best candidate to lead ORU to a bright and successful future while remaining true to its founding vision and core values,” said ORU Board Chair Mart Green. “Chancellor Oral Roberts founded this university on big thinking and innovation. In this day and age where technology and culture are constantly shifting, Dr. Wilson’s global vision, experience and relationships will be a catalyst for growth and transformation.”

Wilson was selected as the result of a nine-month search process led by the ORU Presidential Search Committee made up of representatives from the ORU Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, alumni and students. The board leveraged the expertise of CarterBaldwin Executive Search. More than 170 presidential prospects were nominated for consideration.

“Oral had a saying on his desk: Make no little plans here,” Wilson says. “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.”

Wilson has fostered unique global partnerships through Empowered21—an initiative launched at ORU that brings together ministry leaders, scholars and next-generation voices from the Spirit-empowered movement. Empowered21 has expanded exponentially and today influences nations through 12 regional cabinets with significant ministry leaders.

“As ORU leads in the Spirit-empowered movement, we want to be a servant to this movement,” Wilson said. “God is calling us to serve. My prayer is that ORU will have a servant heart and a servant mentality. I want us to serve our community, I want us to serve the world at large, and I especially want us to serve the Spirit-empowered movement in a way that enhances all the ministries that we touch around the world.”

During more than 30 years of ministry, Wilson has served as church administrator, international youth director, senior pastor and international evangelist. He has traveled to more than 75 nations to minister the gospel. He has also authored numerous articles, sermon series, video projects and books, including *Fasting Forward: Advancing Your Spiritual Life Through Fasting*, *Foundations of Faith*, and his latest book, *Father Cry*. Through his weekly program, *Voice of Salvation Ministries' World Impact*, Wilson shares the gospel in all 50 states and 200 nations, with a potential viewing audience of 650 million.

Wilson also served as the executive officer for the Azusa Street Centennial in 2006 in Los Angeles, where more than 50,000 people gathered from 106 nations of the world to celebrate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the Azusa Street Revival.

A native of Owensboro, Ky., Wilson graduated from Western Kentucky University with a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education in 1979. He graduated from the Church of God of Prophecy Bible Training Institute in 1983. He received his Master of Arts degree with a concentration in Evangelism and World Missions at the Church of God Theological Seminary in 1997. He earned his Doctor of Ministry program at the Pentecostal Theological Seminary in 2012. He is an ordained bishop with ministry credentials from the Church of God.

Wilson and his wife, Lisa, currently live Cleveland, Tenn. They have one daughter, Sara, who is serving as a missionary

in Paraguay with her husband Shaun and children Abigail and Samuel. The Wilsons' son, Ashley, is currently pastoring a new church plant in Lexington, Ky., along with his wife Jamie and their children, Anna, Aaron and Amelia.

ORU is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. Founded in 1963, ORU serves students from 49 states and over 50 countries, representing over 40 denominations. ORU offers more than 60 undergraduate majors, 14 master's programs and two doctoral degrees, plus NCAA Division I athletics.