

Chapter 1 – :44

Introduction

John Erling: Granville Oral Roberts was the Founder of Oral Roberts Evangelistic Association and Oral Roberts University. Oral Roberts died December 15th, 2009. He was 91 years old, but on August 11th, 2009, I visited him in Newport Beach, California. Granville Road led up to the gated condominium complex. His condominium was filled with very average furnishings and he sat in his big blue recliner with a blanket on his lap, and his walker nearby, as he spoke with ease about his life. At the time of his interview, he was fighting health issues but determined to be interviewed for this project, which he said was a good idea. Listen now to one of the most famous and controversial religious leaders of the 20th century.

Chapter 2 – 2:00

Early Oklahoma Beginnings

Oral Roberts: My name is Oral Roberts. I was born January 24th, 1918 in Ada, Oklahoma.

John Erling: We are recording this interview in Newport Beach, California. How did your family come to Oklahoma?

OR: They were born there. My grandfather Roberts was born in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and led a 20-team wagon team group to the West, and settled in Arkansas. A town named after him Robertsville, still there by the way. And he went after a few years to Texas for a year or two and then came to Pontotoc County Oklahoma and became a public figure. He was well-known, well-loved. In 1929, he died. I loved him with a passion.

JE: And then your Mother?

OR: My Mother was born, I never got it straight. She may have been born on the side of a creek, with her Indian people. I never got it straight where she was born, because they

lived on the side of the creek, even after she married my Father. And her Mother came to see me one time when she was 79 years of age, and she came from the Creek, from the Blue Creek in Southern Oklahoma.

JE: She was Cherokee wasn't she?

OR: Yes she was.

JE: Yeah. So that means you're half Cherokee?

OR: No, I'm not quite that much, but I'm quite a bit Indian.

JE: And your Father was from Wales?

OR: Yes, my Father's people came from Wales. John Roberts migrated to the United States about 1810. Later he moved to Tuscaloosa. And my Father was not born there. He was born after they came to Arkansas. And then moved to Oklahoma permanently.

Chapter 3 – 3:02

The Beginning of Oral's Ministry

John Erling: Your Father was an Evangelist as well, wasn't he?

Oral Roberts: Yes he was. He was a farmer 'til he was 30 years of age. And he got converted and called to preach and became a very strong powerful preacher. He established 12 churches and built them, and they're still standing.

JE: And your Mother obviously was a deeply spiritual woman and she believed in faith healing herself?

OR: She did, she believed in faith healing more than my Dad did. My Dad was a doctor man, he went to doctors, and my Mother prayed. (Laughter) And taught me how to pray for the sick and she was the smarter of the two. My Mother was a brilliant woman, and I would go to see her when I would have a problem, and I would tell her what it was, and she had an instant-quick mind. And she would tell me what to do, and I did it.

JE: Talk about your family, brothers, sisters?

OR: My oldest brother was Elmer, he died when he was about 90. And Jewel, the next one, died at 89, she was a lovely woman. Vaden was just older than I was, and he died at about 87. And I'm the last of the Roberts'. I'm 91 and a half.

JE: You and Vaden were close there were just two years separating you but you were really close.

OR: Two years.

JE: Yeah.

OR: And we were very close and he watched over me. He was my guardian.

JE: Didn't you live in a- was it a two-room log house?

OR: Yes, I was born in a two-room log house. With a little side room, a little lean-to they called it. And then I went to school at age 6. I stuttered very badly, and I couldn't say my name at school that day.

JE: And?

OR: And the kids tormented me and Vaden took care of me.

JE: In fact I think there were some fist-fights that went on and Vaden -

OR: Yes sir, Vaden did the fist-fighting and I stood by and watched.

JE: So you stammered and stuttered from birth?

OR: Until the Lord healed me at nearly 18 years of age, when I had tuberculosis, and stammered all my life, and was taken to a man in Ada, George Muncy from Cleveland, Tennessee who came with a big tent and prayed for the sick. And my brother Elmer came for me and carried me there in the back seat of his car. And that's was the first time God spoke to me. The first time I ever heard his voice. He said, "Son I'm going to heal you tonight, and you are going to take my healing power to your generation" and that was the beginning of my ministry.

Chapter 4 – 3:44

Oral Runs Away From Home / Diagnosed with Tuberculosis

John Erling: Let me come back to when you were 16, you actually - I don't know if you ran away but you left the house?

Oral Roberts: Yes, I ran away. And my Father threatened to put every policeman in Oklahoma on my trail, and I said, "Dad if you bring me back I'll leave again." So he finally let me go.

JE: What was the drive to make you want to-

OR: It was 50 miles to Atoka. I'd never been anywhere. I'd only been to Konawa, five miles away. I'd never been outside my county.

JE: What made you want to leave your family?

OR: My Coach. I was his star basketball player, and he wanted me to go with him.

JE: But times were kind of tough for the family too, I mean and you, isn't that true?

OR: Well, it's always been tough for my family. He was a preacher. And preachers thought that if, you could be humbled, it would keep you poor. And we were in great poverty until my ministry began in nineteen hundred and forty-seven.

JE: By the time you were a sophomore I think you had attended about 10 different schools because you-

OR: Yes, that's right.

JE: So then, you went to Atoka with your Coach and you were a good basketball player?

OR: Well, he said I was. So maybe I was, maybe I wasn't.

JE: Well, he recruited you, what position did you play?

OR: I played Center. We didn't have any tall players at that time. That was seventy-four years ago.

JE: You did many different jobs, I think you worked for the newspaper, The Ada Evening News.

OR: Yes, I established at Ada Evening News there as a reporter. And I worked for a Judge's widow, who rented rooms out to the faculty at the school for my room and board. And I worked in a grocery market on Saturday for some change. And went to church on Sunday, to the Methodist Church there in Atoka. And I joined the Methodist Church when I was 12.

JE: Is the fact that you were a basketball player the thing that drove you to promote basketball at your school? That you chose basketball because you had played basketball?

OR: Yes, I had played basketball for this Coach.

JE: Right.

OR: Who was my Coach at Ada and he was moved to Atoka and he asked me would I go with him, and I told him I would.

JE: So then tell us about when you were playing basketball and you were about set to go to the state tournament, and you were actually dribbling the ball, tell us what happened.

OR: Well, I was dribbling down the court to make what we called a driving lay-up. And while I was making the lay-up I became unconscious and fell to the floor. And Coach came and picked me up and put me in the car and said, "Oral I'm taking you home to your Mother and Father." They called the doctors and they came and diagnosed me with tuberculosis.

JE: Do you remember the feeling you had when you heard that-tuberculosis?

OR: Yes, it was a death notice to me because I knew that TB killed people, like cancer does today. It was the worst disease we had and I lay there a hundred and sixty-three days until my brother came for me to be healed.

JE: Did you go to a sanatorium?

OR: No, I was signed up-

JE: But never went?

OR: I signed up through the judge and he talked me out of it after he signed me up. He said Talihina, Oklahoma is the worst place to go with TB. Because if you don't really have it, you'll have it when you come out. And he scared me to death and he said, "You need to be with your parents in a little house and just tough it out."

Chapter 5 – 3:43**Oral is Cured of Tuberculosis**

John Erling: You're 17, 18 years old about this time, aren't you? There you laid in that bed for a hundred and sixty-three days, probably not knowing whether you wanted to live or die?

Oral Roberts: Well, that's true because the doctors, three of them, Dr. King, Dr. Shy, I will think of the other one in a minute, they told me that I had three or four months to live and the last two weeks, they told me I had two weeks to live. So I resigned myself to it. That I was going to die. And the Lord saved my life.

JE: A healing evangelist came to Pontotoc County?

OR: Yeah, Pontotoc.

JE: Tell us then how it was that you were cured of tuberculosis? Did he pray for you that- Minister?

OR: Yes.

JE: What was-

OR: He prayed for me that night, and when he touched me with his hand and said, "You foul, tormenting disease, I command you in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, come out of this boy!" Just like that. "Come out of this boy and enter him no more." The presence of God filled my whole being. Filled my lungs, and I could breathe from all the way down to the bottom of my lungs. And I rose up from the chair I was sitting in and ran across the stage and he put a microphone in my hand and I testified that I was healed. And I was really healed.

JE: But to verify the healing, I think you had a doctor-

OR: Yes, Dr. Mowry in Tulsa from the Sugg Clinic. He fluoroscoped my lungs and then asked if he could send my blood to Oklahoma City to the state medical department. And they examined it and sent me a message that "No TB found" and that's as far as I went.

JE: So then that had to influence you on because there was a time in your early life, when you were kind of running from God. But you saw this healing in your body. And so then, was that the instant that you said I too want to be an evangelist and I want to be in the healing ministry?

OR: I had just been converted. And that week, my brother came to Stratford, Oklahoma, where my Dad was pastor in a little church. He said, "Oral get dressed. I'm taking you to Brother Muncy who's going to pray for you and you're going to be healed." I said, "Elmer, I can't get dressed. I've been here five months." And he said, "I'll dress you." So he dressed me, and he and Papa carried me to the car and put me in the back seat of the car and talked about the meetings. He and Mama and Papa were driving in the front seat. I lay there in the back listening. And all of a sudden, I lost contact with them, and I heard the

voice of God for the first time in my life. I was not a Christian. I had never had a religious thought. But the Lord's voice came to me and said, "Son, I am going to heal you and you are to take my healing power to your generation." I knew it was God. I had Him to repeat it three times. And when I got there, I knew I would be healed. And after I was healed I entered the ministry. And I didn't pray for the sick very much for the next 12 years.

Chapter 6 – 3:32

Oral Meet Evelyn/First Church in Shawnee

John Erling: Tell me about the time you preached your first sermon?

Oral Roberts: Well, it wasn't a sermon, but maybe 10 or 12 minutes. Yes, I remember those little sermons. That was a scary time for me to get up and try to preach.

JE: Were you a little bashful, you mean, was it difficult for you to stand up in front of a crowd you think?

OR: Well, not really, because I had just been healed from Brother Muncy and my lungs were now whole. And my stuttering was healed and it was gone. And I stood up and preached by my Father's side. I preached every other night with him. He was an evangelist. And he'd preach one night, and I (would) the next. I soon fell in with it, and in four or five months I left my Father and went on my own.

JE: Along about 1936 you met a very lovely lady.

OR: I met her in nineteen and thirty-eight. I was driving with a friend of mine who had a big truck. He carried tomatoes and I was in the front seat with him and he we were talking and he said, "Oral, it's time you got married." And I agreed with him but I had not found anybody. And he said, "What do you want in a wife?" I said, "I want ten things." And he asked me to tell him what they were. I told him and he said, "I know the girl." I said, "Where is she?" He said, "She's 600 miles away at South Texas." And I called her and talked to her. And then I wrote her every day. And I asked her could I come and see her in September. And I went down to see her. And when my Mother learned I was going, she went with me. (Laughter) And Evelyn and I went out to the Gulf of Mexico fishing and caught only each other. I fell in love with her immediately, and we had a marriage of 65 years. The greatest days of my life, until she went home to God, four and a half years ago.

JE: She was 88 then I think when-

OR: I think she was.

JE: Yeah.

OR: Eighty... she was nine months older than I.

JE: And then the children that you had from that marriage, let's just name them now.

OR: Rebecca, Ronnie, Richard, Roberta.

JE: Back to your ministry here, you actually pastored a church in Shawnee, Oklahoma. Was that your first Church that you pastored?

OR: Really it was. I was a little pastor at a small church for two or three months, it didn't amount to anything. But I was called to the Shawnee Church. And I went there, stayed three years and entered Oklahoma Baptist University to start my education.

JE: And then you also pastored in Enid?

OR: In Enid, Oklahoma and I went to school there in Phillips University.

JE: Phillips University. Then we bring you to Tulsa.

OR: Yes, I came to Tulsa.

JE: Let me just ask you why you chose Tulsa? You could have gone to Oklahoma City-

OR: In nineteen hundred and forty-seven, I chose Tulsa because of the airlines. I knew that my ministry was going to take me to the ends of the Earth, and throughout America. And that there were reasonable airlines in Tulsa at that time Braniff and others, American. I decided that Tulsa was the place for me. And I went and found a little place, a five-room house on north Main and started my ministry.

Chapter 7 – 5:06

Man Shoots at Oral / Oral Heals Deaf Boy in Nowata

John Erling: Your first service in Tulsa would have been in a tent?

Oral Roberts: Yes. It was Steve Pringle was the Pastor, and he had a thousand-seat tent up, and when I got there he had heard that I had had a visitation from the Lord. And he asked me would I come and preach a couple of nights for him. Tuesday and Wednesday, and I was glad to do that cause I didn't know very many people in Tulsa. And I went and at the end of two nights, his crowds had doubled and he asked me would I stay 'til Sunday. Well, by Sunday all the seats were filled and people were standing. And it was a great time. I stayed there nine weeks. And during the Crusade a man stepped across the street, pulled out his gun, and shot at me. And the hole was 18 inches from my head. And we asked him, or the Police asked him, why he did that. He said he didn't know. He didn't know me. He didn't have anything against me. He just felt like he should do it. And we-we forgave him and went on our way.

JE: You were involved in your healing ministry at that time. You were healing people weren't you?

OR: Yes. Yes. I was about four or five weeks into it.

JE: So wasn't it at that time that the national media, picked up on your story.

- OR: Yes they picked up the story big time, and they carried the headlines that “Evangelist is Shot at”. And it must have been a down time in the media that day because the papers of America picked it up. And in one day I was known from coast-to-coast.
- JE: And then, your life changed again because I’m quite certain, there were a lot of questions there were people calling, other evangelists wanting to be in touch with you?
- OR: Yes, they phoned in, and they flew in, and they came by car, and they came from the north, from Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, all those states, and people from Oklahoma. They asked me after I left Tulsa Crusade to come to their churches, and that’s how I launched my ministry.
- JE: You conducted a one-night service in Nowata, Oklahoma, which turned out to be one of the most important nights of your life and the life of a little deaf boy?
- OR: That’s right. The little boy when his ears popped open, he looked up at his Mother. He was about 10 or 12 something like that, and he was scared. He had never heard before. She broke into tears. Hugged him and kissed him. And I talked to him. I got behind him where he couldn’t see my lips. And I talked to him and I became convinced that we had a miracle. And it was a great time in my life.
- JE: Is this the time then, when you talked about the feeling that you got in your right hand?
- OR: That came around the same time, I kept feeling something tickling or vibrating in my right hand, I didn’t know what it was, and so I ignored it. And I was heavy in seeking after God, because I didn’t want to be like other preachers. I wanted to plan my own path. And I went on a heavy fast and prayer time to ask God what this was in my hand. And he told me that it was his presence and that from that power you will heal the sick. And you will feel my presence in your right hand. He said, “It will come down your elbow and your right arm and your right hand and no other place in your body.” And I thought that was kind of strange. But it was true. The power came in my right hand at different times. It didn’t come all the time. The first time that I really knew for sure was the Nowata experience. I touched the little boy and then I went to a faith temple for a few services in Tulsa, and they were a couple of girls, Edith and Erma. And Erma had had tuberculosis. She had been to Talihina and had come home, but she wasn’t healed. So she came to Evelyn and me we had known them for several years. I reached over and touched her in the name of Christ, and she’s the first person who noticed my hand. She said, “Oral, what is that in your hand?” I said, “It’s nothing Erma. It’s nothing.” ‘Cause I didn’t understand it myself. She said, “There’s got to be something in your hand.” I said, “Why do you say that?” She said, “The current flowed through my body like fire when you touched me with your right hand.” And so I knew then, that it was open to the public – the public had heard about it.

Chapter 8 – 2:55**Oral Is Tested in Philadelphia / Co-Evangelist Bob DeWeese**

John Erling: One time you were tested on that in Philadelphia Crusade because about three o'clock in the afternoon you would begin to be by yourself in a hotel room and kind of prepare your mind and rest. And then isn't it true that as you got closer to Crusade time, you became concerned about something?

Oral Roberts: Yes, I became concerned because I'd made a vow in my own private prayer life that I would never go in to the pulpit again the rest of my life unless I first prayed and felt the presence of God in my right hand, in my room and it didn't come. So they sent a driver after me at the regular time and I told him just to wait outside, cause I couldn't go 'til I felt the presence of God in my right hand. I sat there through church time and I sat there another hour because I vowed I wouldn't go. I just sat in my chair. I didn't even pray to speak of. And about 8:30 the presence of God came in my hand and throughout my flesh and I told him I was ready and we went. And when I-we entered a side door of the Metropolitan Auditorium in Philadelphia, the crowd was standing. And when I walked in they began to praise God and to rejoice and they had a great time on my quarter. I walked in and told what had happened and preached and it fitted into the Crusade.

JE: Was Bob DeWeese then about to introduce you?

OR: Bob was about two years later.

JE: Oh, okay. But you might mention him, or we can talk about him for a moment here. He was like your co-evangelist?

OR: He was the co-evangelist. He was a great man. And he'd said that he'd rather preach as my co-evangelist than to go on his own because he could reach lots more people going with me than going by himself. And Bob was a personable man, he was a man of personality. He was a big man about 6' 3" or 4", he veiled for the Olympics. He was a swimmer. And he stood by my left side when I prayed for the sick. He handed me the prayer cards that I could read when I prayed for the sick. And all of my TV ministry he was there, He set up the Crusades. He flew into town with the sponsoring pastors. He was the best man that I ever had. He was with me 30 years, I guess. And he died in '78. And he was a great, great man. I didn't lose many people. My main people stayed with me, I kept most of the men and women that I hired.

Chapter 9 – 5:56**Oral Meets Billy Graham**

John Erling: I think it was about 1949 or 1950 that you met Billy Graham in Portland?

Oral Roberts: I did. I met him by accident. I checked in the hotel that night because I heard he was there and I wanted to slip in the auditorium and hear him. And I went in to get a snack before I went to the meeting and as I was leaving the café room my wife, he, and his wife, were sitting over there eating. And he hollered at me. And I stopped and he said, “Oral, I’ve been hoping to meet you and you attend my meetings.” and I said, “I’m here for one night to meet you and to hear you preach and to feel the power of God.” And he said, “Go with me in my cab.” He took me there and he said, “You are to pray tonight you just lead the service in prayer.” And I said, “Billy, that might not be the thing to do because I’m very controversial in my healing ministry.” And he said, “You’re not controversial in my services.” I said, “Well. I think you’ll find I am.” So I prayed that night and preached a fine sermon. And afterward Evelyn and I were hunting for a cab to go back to the hotel, when a man and wife came to the edge of the crowd, and said, “We’ve been praying for God to send you where we were, because my wife has cancer.” And I said, “Well, I cannot pray in another man’s meeting for the healing of a person.” And I really felt that. And they said, “Well, you’ll meet this at the Judgment if you turn us down, because we’ve come a long distance. We didn’t know you were going to be here. But you were here for us.” I said, “Okay, step outside the tabernacle out in the middle of the street and I’ll pray for your wife.” And I prayed for her and I didn’t know it, but the Pastor of the biggest church—the International Four Square Church, the biggest church in Portland, he was standing by observing all this. And he walked up to me and met me and said, “Oral Roberts, we’ve been praying and the Pastors and I have decided to invite you to bring your Crusade to Portland. And I agreed, and I came the next year, and I went there for 10 or 12 years, every year in the fall of the year, and we had great Crusades, up to 10,000 people a night.

JE: And I think Billy said that he had come to a couple of your Crusades in Florida.

OR: Billy surprised me. He said, “When you were in Florida in 1949, my associate and I attended two or three nights in your big tent, and we sat in the back because we wanted to observe, and we were very, very touched. And he said, “I want you to lead in prayer tonight” so he made a big, big step.

JE: Was it true that two of his relatives had come to your healing service and had been prayed for?

OR: Yes, there had been quite a few of the people related to him. And Billy was the most generous man in the ministry I’ve ever met. He accepted all men, even the Catholic

priests. He accepted me as a Brother and after that there were several times that I met with Billy and we had good times in the Lord. Once I was in North Carolina near his place, and he sent a man over to ask me to come for brunch at his house. And I turned him down because of the controversial part. I didn't want to infect him. (Laughter) And he said, "No, I want you." And he sent the man back. And Evelyn and I went to the house, and they had a nice brunch and afterward we talked about the Lord, and about his Crusades, which was what I was interested in. And he said, I guess I can say this, he said-well, I don't know if I should say it or not, because it was too lavish. He fell in love with my ministry. And I told him I had fallen in love with his ministry the first time I heard him. And I counted him as the Number One Evangelist in the world. And he accepted that, and he wanted something of what I had. And I said, "Billy, you're just fine the way you are." We became very close friends. We met in his home, we met in other places, and wherever I came to his Crusade, he had me pray.

JE: The two of you are about the same age. You were both born in the same year I believe.

OR: Yes. Yes.

JE: And so, that was back in your early 30s, when you two were meeting and talking and he respected your ministry, but he just admitted, that he did not have the gift of healing.

OR: He said that's why he didn't pray for the sick. And he said, "You have it, and I don't." I said, "Well, God has given you a great soul-winning call." He said, "That's right, and that's what I have to do."

JE: Here we are in 2009, and this is August 11th, so many similarities to you, you both have lost your wives, have you been in contact with him in the last months or the past year?

OR: It's been about a year. This walker that I use-

JE: Yes.

OR: When I bought that, I bought one for Billy 'cause I heard he had sort of a homemade one, and I sent it to him. And he wrote me back and thanked me, and said, "Oral, you've sent me the Cadillac." (Laughter) And I love it, and so we both use the same walker. We've had some good times together.

Chapter 10 – 1:46

Electric Current in Oral's Arm

John Erling: You've referred to this controversy that came up out-with your healing ministry, how did that bother you? Did you have a hard time understanding why people could not accept your healing as from God?

Oral Roberts: Yes, I couldn't understand it all because I was so sincere. And I prayed for

the sick in the public where everybody could see me, and I wasn't prepared. I had no experience of being accepted by a great crowd. And when the big crowds came, the opposition came, and they thought I had an electrical cord under the platform, coming up that attached to my arm. And I had been praying for a bunch of deaf children from a deaf school nearby, and some of them had been healed, and I pulled up my sleeves and I showed them I didn't have anything. But I said this, "If I thought that having electrical current coming down my arm (would help) to pray for the sick I would do it, but I don't have it.

JE: Maybe you understood why the public had a hard time understanding your healing ministry, and so you were willing to accept that and live with it?

OR: Yes, I accepted it, lived with it. I never struck back at anybody, at anybody who ever struck against me. I never got into a fight. It takes two to fight. And you lived in Tulsa you know that's the truth. I never struck back at anybody.

JE: Yes.

OR: And that took the starch out of their opposition.

Chapter 11 – 3:52

One-Million-Dollar Loan in 1958

John Erling: In 1947 when you closed your nine-week Crusade in Tulsa you were 29 years old and then secretaries were asked to help you with all the mail that was coming in. And I believe there was one of those and her name was Ruth Hansen.

Oral Roberts: Yes, Ruth came with two other girls as volunteers. When the Crusade was over, the two girls left and she said, I want to work for you. And we hired Ruth, she was the first person we hired and she's still with me, 60, some-odd years and she's the best I ever had, she's still my secretary.

JE: You worked out of your house on North Main at first?

OR: Yes. I worked out of my house until the mail began to fill it up. (Laughter) And I went and bought a place on South Boulder. And I built an office, and we soon overflowed it. I built a three-story office next to it, and we overflowed it. And then I built the eight-story building that's there now.

JE: And that would have been like in 1959?

OR: Yes, I left it in about '62 or '63 when I started building ORU.

JE: You were only in that building for about three years?

OR: Yes, that's right.

JE: Okay. And you were 41. Talk to us about—because you needed money to be building this

brand-new building in downtown Tulsa, I mean, did you get a loan? Was it easy to get a loan? Did banks help you?

OR: The banks were very nice to me in Tulsa. I asked for a million-dollar loan for a three-million-dollar building. I had contacted my partners that I had to have a building because my mail was filling us up. And they had supported me, but I got down to the last million dollars, and it was real tough. I went up to the 4th National Bank, to President Johnson, and he told me when you need the million dollars, you come back. I came back in a few months and said, "I'm ready now." And he said, "About what?" And he had forgotten the whole thing. At that threw me into a tailspin. I went to the 1st National Bank, through our insurance man, who knew them well and knew me well and told them that I was a good buy, and they went up and loaned me one million dollars. And Mr. McClintock (sp?) Senior, said he wanted to hand me the check personally. And he handed me the check and I walked out of there feeling like a million dollars. (Laughter)

JE: A million dollars and that's along in 1960—or '59 when you built it, and so '58 they were handing you a check for a million dollars.

OR: Yes, yes.

JE: So banks want collateral, I mean, what, what were they going to use as collateral?

OR: Well, they were getting my deposits. They and the Bank of Oklahoma, I divided half and half-

JE: Between the 4th National-

OR: The 4th National, I left them when the man forgot me.

JE: Okay.

OR: And I went to the 1st National and then the Bank of Oklahoma through the man who worked for us later, who was President of TU for awhile. Anyway, I had a perfect record. I had never been late on a payment, on anything. They sent their men down to the office and went through the books and they said, "This is a good loan." The 1st National Bank did. And from then on I borrowed my money there.

JE: And do you remember how you paid that off, or how long it took or did you take it for-

OR: It took a couple of years.

JE: Do you remember what the interest rate was?

OR: It was 4 percent, because that's what I-I told them that I wanted. And one of the bankers said, "Who do you think you are? You're just a country preacher?" I said, "That's right. That's right. I am a country preacher, and I want a 4-percent loan." And I got it.

Chapter 12 – 4:40**IBM Computer**

John Erling: Individual business people were kind to you – helped you?

Oral Roberts: They were very kind to me in Tulsa. The best friends I had in Tulsa were the business people, and that's still true today.

JE: You were trying to answer all these prayer requests that were coming in, in '59 and '60. I think along about that time IBM was just turning out the new 1400 computer?

OR: Yes, I sent Al Bush up there when I heard about it, because we were using plain typewriters. We had, oh we had 200 of them. And no matter how many we got, we couldn't stay up with the mail. And I had a dedication to the people who wrote me, that we would read your letter. We would pick out something in it, which we would say back in our letter to you to let you know we saw the letter. And that made the mail (load) even more. The mail was just covering us up. A million letters a year at that time. It went up from that. But it was a million letters a year at that time. And I heard about IBM coming out with the 1400, and the man in my office who was mechanical, was Al Bush. And I sent him up there. And I said don't come back until you show them how they can adapt the 1400 to me answering my letter personally. Nobody had ever done that in the ministry that I knew about.

JE: Or perhaps in the world of computers it had never been done?

OR: We were getting thousands and thousands of letters. We had 30, 40 people answering my words. I never let anybody answer a letter. I sat down and talked the letter and they took different paragraphs that I spoke and they chose the paragraph that would fit the letter that came. I always said "Dear John" and I greeted the family. I remember one year we had seven million letters that came into the office, and we'd answered every one of them. When we got the 1400 they had transformed it through Al Bush's mechanical gifts. And we brought it to Tulsa, and we were happy people because we could answer our mail in the most personal way, and the mail took off again.

JE: So you actually looked at every letter?

OR: I didn't.

JE: No. But you said you spoke, you said you were able to speak your words.

OR: Well, I took a number of letters each week.

JE: Right.

OR: And I would read them and pray over them and I would answer those letters personally.

JE: Right.

OR: And then I talked to my letter writers, and I said this is what I want. I want you to take my paragraphs that I'm saying to these people, and you choose the paragraph, and you have

to be careful because I will know. The people will let me know if the letter isn't personal. So it stayed personal, just like it is today.

JE: A gentleman by the name of Lee Braxton, who was Lee Braxton to you?

OR: Lee Braxton was a businessman in North Carolina, who had 22 corporations and flew to my Miami meeting in 1949 and was sold, he sold himself on the Crusade. He came up to be healed, and was healed of something in his body and went back to North Carolina and he contacted me. And he flew to Tulsa, 'cause he said, "You've got to know a man in his own town." He joined me as a Dollar-a-year man? And stayed with me I guess 30 or 40 years.

JE: And he encouraged you to get involved in Tulsa's community life?

OR: Yes.

JE: The Downtown Rotary Club-

OR: Yes, yes he changed my thinking. I was just concerned about my own ministry and I didn't know anybody in Tulsa knew about me really. I was so involved in my personal ministry. And he said, "It's wrong." He said, "You're in this town and you're a prominent businessman, and you're getting bigger every year, you must go to the Clubs. You've got to join Rotary and other Clubs, and go to the Chamber of Commerce and let them elect you on the executive committee and so on. And I did it. It was the right thing to do.

JE: You were also then appointed to the Board of Directors of the Bank of Oklahoma?

OR: Yes, I was appointed to that through John Williams, who took an interest in my ministry.

JE: Also Oklahoma Natural Gas?

OR: Oklahoma Natural Gas, I forget the President's name

JE: Charlie Ingram?

OR: Charlie. Charlie was a dear friend of mine. I cut off joining any other, (clubs) but those were great, great businesses.

Chapter 13 – 4:06

Farm at 81st & Lewis

John Erling: During the late '50s, you would drive your car to South of Tulsa and you would park it in front of a farm at 81st and Lewis.

Oral Roberts: And I had my wife and children. I asked them to get out of the car, stretch their hands out toward that piece of property, and pray that the Lord would keep it for me. I had announced to my wife and children that I was building a university. And I know I was sounding arrogant, but I really felt it. We did that several times. It was owned by a farmer. A man who was a farmer but he was mainly an oilman. And he decided he didn't want to

sell. And we waited him out a few months. And once out here in Newport Beach I woke up with a great feeling in my heart, that he would sell that day. I can't explain that. So I called Sol Jaegar my attorney and told him to go today. And he said, "Oral there's no need, I've been to his attorneys several times, they will not sell." I said, "Go today, or I'll find another man." He said, "I'll go." And he went, and the man said he decided to sell it the night before.

JE: Do you remember what kind of money you paid for that land?

OR: Yes, I paid \$1,825 an acre. I bought 160 acres from the man. He had another 20 acres, I bought that. And then I went across the street and bought 160 acres. And then I bought an adjacent piece of land. I had 500 acres. I paid \$4,250 an acre for the additional land. Some men in Tulsa heard I was interested in it, and so they went out and bought it and sold it to me for a great profit. Well anyway, I paid them \$4,250 for the extra land, 'cause I knew, there's no buildings around there, it was like I was in the county. In fact I was in the county at first and I knew what I was going to build. Nobody believed me, but I knew. And I knew if I owned that land and had to sell something, I'd have land to sell at an increased price.

JE: Did you have the money to buy it then? What were the terms of it?

OR: The terms of the first 160 acres was a very low down payment. He said he didn't want a big down payment. Which was right down my alley because I didn't have a lot of money. And I bought it, and I bought the other land, and I had 500 acres. And Billy Jo Daugherty came out to build a church, and I paid \$4,250 an acre and I asked him for \$150,000 an acre. And he bought it, across the street from the school. And he's not sorry that he did.

JE: You know, in addition to being a faith healer and an evangelist, as I've talked to other people, you were also known as a good businessman.

OR: Well, I considered myself a good businessman, because I dealt with the big business people of Tulsa. I got into that group through John Williams, and I loved it.

JE: Some said you could have been a success in any business if you'd-

OR: Well, I wouldn't say that, but I might have been a success in some businesses.

JE: Yeah.

Chapter 14 – 4:48

Opposition to Building The City of Faith

John Erling: But with this decision to start a university, you met with some controversy even amongst your own people? Even I think your-your 12 evangelists who came to work with you?

Oral Roberts: Yes, they called me into an office and said if you're going to build a university that means you're leaving the healing ministry. I assured them I was not, because that was the foundation of the school. And they said, "Well, we love you, we've been here a long time, and we're going to leave you." And I said, "Okay and I'll pray for you and God bless you." And when I said that they sat down and changed their mind, and nobody left. (Laughter) They had to have a lot of faith, because I was just one man.

JE: But again the call for you to start that university was so strong that you knew you could make that statement.

OR: I'd had it 26 years. I had the call when I was healed. The Lord told me I was to build Him a university based on His authority in the Holy Spirit. Those are the exact words he said to me, and through the years I talked about it but nobody believed me. But when I paid down on the land, and got the land and I started building buildings, they began to change their minds.

JE: So then there was—the Evangelicals and the Pentecostals too were—

OR: It was the Pentecostals who didn't understand it. And I didn't take exception to them, 'cause I knew in my heart that I was to do it. When God spoke to me, I moved. If He didn't speak to me, I didn't move. I've never done anything of a substantial nature, until I heard the voice of God. And He spoke to me, "Build me a university based on my authority in the Holy Spirit." All I knew to do was to wait on Him. And I traveled over America and other nations and I searched the schools of the world. I visited Harvard and Yale and all the other schools, Stanford, I became educated in building a university. They all told me one thing. I got it from a University of Washington group. They said, "A university exists to gain knowledge, to add to it and to pass it on." And I said, "I don't believe that." I believed that God should be in the university, and I announced to my partners and my supporters, what I was going to do. I was not going to build a regular university, though the academic part turned out to be, fully accredited, and all that, but I built a character thing into the university. He was one of them, he was one of my main men.

JE: We should say that Chuck and Sherry Ramsay are with us. And you meant "he" meaning—you meant Chuck.

OR: Yes. Yes, I've not seen him in a long time and I'm so glad to see them both because they've been true to me.

JE: You added the character as you said to the university—

OR: Yes.

JE: Building the whole man, talk to us about that.

OR: I tried to find men and women who had Ph.D.s, who were filled with the Holy Spirit. And if they didn't have that, I passed them up. And I found that these men and women had gained their Ph.D.s and were in schools that were secular, and were waiting for someone

like me. And I hired them, why, I think we had 85 percent had Ph.D.s when we opened the school.

JE: Yeah.

OR: All filled with the Holy Spirit. Do you remember that Chuck?

JE: Because you said you didn't speak out unless God spoke to you about it, were there any other dreams that as a human being you thought you had had but you couldn't get God to bless it for you?

OR: Well, I would go up to two years, and once, 26 years without hearing His voice because I was determined that I was going to hear His voice or I wasn't going to move. Each time he spoke to me I carried that out. And I'd build a building 'cause he spoke to me. The reason that we could build was because I really heard God. I heard Him in my soul and I carried it for several years, 'til it - it burdened me. It overwhelmed me. And when it came time to build, I knew. And I was sold and I sold the people.

JE: And when you say God spoke to me, some people think that Oral heard God audibly speak to him. But it was actually in your being-

OR: Yes.

JE: In your soul-

OR: Yes, but the words were very clear.

JE: Right.

OR: Yes. Yes, I can tell you the words every time He spoke to me.

Chapter 15 – 6:53

God Will Take Oral Home

John Erling: On September 9th, 1977, the announcement was made of the City of Faith, and you were 59 years old. You heard God call you-

Oral Roberts: I did.

JE: To build this hospital.

Oral Roberts: I never wanted a hospital. I argued with God and He just ignored me and poured out His words into my heart and I wrote them down. "I'll rain on your desert." I was in the Palm Springs area and I saw all that undulating land, like a desert. And one night came a flash flood. I rain on your desert. The flowers came up. And He spoke to me and said, "I'll rain on your desert if you'll build the hospital." And so I built it. And then we ran out of money.

JE: There always had to be a fight. There was a fight to obtain a certificate of need.

OR: Yes, there was a big fight.

- JE: Talk to us a little bit about that. Because you might have thought to yourself, well this fight is going on so strong, is this God's way of telling me I'm not supposed to be doing this?
- OR: No, no, no I knew. He spoke to me, I knew. What's the name of the man who was in charge of all of it? Been there for 30, 40 years, I can't think of his name right now, but he became my personal friend. This was a state official.
- JE: Well, I know Governor David Boren was supportive of you.
- OR: Yes. Yes, he was very supportive. And I-
- JE: Was it Rader?
- OR: Who?
- JE: Lloyd Rader?
- OR: Lloyd Rader, the best friend I ever had.
- JE: And why was that?
- OR: I don't know.
- JE: What did he do for you to help you through this certificate of need?
- OR: There were two other people on the Board with him, and he went in and had me meet them, and tell the story and they were sold. But nobody else was sold. And I was turned down, but I never gave up 'cause I knew God spoke to me.
- JE: You had hospitals opposing you. Some in-in the public, they thought they had enough hospital beds in Tulsa. Even some churches were upset about it?
- OR: That wasn't the reason, but that was the excuse they gave.
- JE: What was the reason for churches to be opposing you?
- OR: I don't know about the churches opposing me.
- JE: You said that was not the reason?
- OR: No, you said hospitals were against me.
- JE: Yes.
- OR: And they were dynamically against me. I think they missed something. But that didn't keep me from building. And we were off to a great start. But about 5 or 6 years later, the money started dropping off. And I'd always paid my bills. And when I couldn't pay them, I'd shut something down. But I'm never sorry that I built the City of Faith.
- JE: Yeah. Is that when you needed 8 million dollars?
- OR: Yes.
- JE: And that's when the story came that God said he would take you home if you didn't raise the money.
- OR: Well I could understand the media because they take something you say, and they know how to fix it. I never said that, but they said I said it, so there's no reason for me to argue. And so, that's the way it was. It's just another opposition.

- JE: Oh you didn't feel that God really said that he's going to take you home?
- OR: No.
- JE: Did you feel that threat?
- OR: No, no, no. He did say it. But he didn't say it the way they said it.
- JE: I understand. They said, "Oral Roberts is going to die- "
- OR: That's right.
- JE: If he doesn't-
- OR: That's right. That's right.
- JE: And you said, that God said that he would take you home. That is what I said.
- JE: Yeah.
- OR: Exactly the very words I said. But I couldn't stop it, so I let it go.
- JE: Right. But, you raised the money.
- OR: I raised the money.
- JE: And I think about that time too, one of the reasons you were not getting as much income. There'd been scandals of other evangelists-
- OR: Yes-
- JE: In the news-
- OR: But there'd never been one on me.
- JE: No, but as a result of this, it fell over into other evangelists.
- OR: Yes, that really crippled all of us for a few years. But overcame that finally. The City of Faith now is being leased. It's 60 percent leased. And the Greens will fix it up, and it will be totally lease-able.
- JE: Yep. And I want to talk to you about the Greens in just a moment. David Wilkerson had a life of dealing with drug addicts in New York City, had the best-selling book *The Cross and The Switchblade*. He spoke to the students and then he wanted to talk to you. He talked to you about shutting the institutions down didn't he?
- OR: Yes. Yes.
- JE: And that had to come as shock to you.
- OR: Well, it did, because the Lord hadn't spoke to me. And until He spoke to me, I didn't close it. I told David I couldn't close it until He spoke to me. 'Cause I always depend on His voice.
- JE: When he said that and he left, you had to grapple with that wondering is this God speaking to me through David Wilkerson?
- OR: I've never been one to take other people's words for God's words.
- JE: Right. So then-
- OR: Many people tried to tell me things but I never took any of it.
- JE: So then you sensed from God it was time-

OR: Yes.

JE: To shut it down.

OR: Yes.

JE: I think that you feel that building the hospital was good because the idea of combining faith and medicine began to become more accepted throughout the United States in other hospitals.

OR: Yes. When I closed the City of Faith the American Medical Association sent their number one man down to preside and to relocate the medical students in other schools. He told me, he said, "Dr. Roberts, I know this is a let down in your spirit. You may not know that the medical world has known every step you've taken. We've followed you on TV, because you built it on TV." And he said, "I want you to know you've not been a failure because you have affected the Medical Association forever. There was no talking about merging medicine and prayer until you came along. And you're right, some day it will be there." And that was a kind word.

JE: Yep. And to this day has got to make you feel good-

OR: Yes it does.

JE: That you, you built that hospital.

OR: I've never been sorry.

JE: Yeah.

Chapter 16 – 4:13

Family Tragedies / Daughter Killed and Son's Suicide

John Erling: You've suffered tragedies in your life. Others have as well. I feel some freedom to ask you about Rebecca and her husband, Marshall Nash and how they were killed in 1977 in that plane crash.

Oral Roberts: Yes.

JE: How did you handle that?

OR: We were driving over to tell the children that their Dad and Mother were not coming home from Colorado.

JE: The children of Rebecca and Marshall, right.

OR: Yes. And it was a hard experience for Evelyn and me. We were crushed. And on the way over I heard God's voice, "I know something about this that you don't know." And I asked Evelyn the next Sunday, would she get up on TV with me and let us tell people exactly how we felt? And you could tell how we felt by watching us. And she said, "I can't do it." And I said, "I'll do it alone." And that changed her (mind) and so she was with me. And we

got up on TV and we told exactly how everything happened. I was always open to the people. And I told it, and we had the largest TV audience we'd ever had. We had 5 million by the ratings system. It was a crushing experience for their three children. Bill Nash took them at my request because I knew that we older people were not in their generation. They wanted to come with me, but Bill and Edna were young. So that was a crushing blow until the next one when my son took his life.

JE: And you're talking about Ronnie.

OR: Yes.

JE: And he was born in '43 and he went to Stanford. And he became confused about his faith when he was in Stanford?

OR: Yes. He was and I went out there and restored him twice. And the psychiatrist had him, and I didn't know they had so much power, and I treaded very carefully about my son. I talked to this woman to release him in my hands. I was his father and she refused. And I just kept holding on until she did. And I brought him back to Tulsa and put him in rehab, 'cause he was a drug addict.

JE: Wasn't it prescription drugs that he was addicted to?

OR: No it was-

JE: Street drugs-

OR: Regular Drugs.

JE: Cocaine and-

OR: Well,

JE: And whatever drugs were on the street?

OR: Whatever they were-

JE: Okay.

OR: And I thought he was cured from the rehab and he wasn't. He finally was on his Ph.D. at USC in Los Angeles and was just a few weeks away from getting his Ph.D. And he got a hold of some kind of drugs, he divorced his wife, and rented the place and came out to see me, to borrow money. And I had some money in my wallet, and I gave him every dollar of it and I said, "This is the last money you'll ever get because my money was not given to me to support drugs. I cannot give you any more money." And he took it and left, and saw that the jig was up, and went out and shot himself.

JE: You're in communication with God and

OR: Well,

JE: Here's Rebecca and her husband are taken, and, and here's Ronnie -

OR: Well, you remember the Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Dr.-he, he called me, Dr. Hagin called me, and other Pastors called me and gave me Scriptures and we prayed and we got over it. It took some hard time to get over it. But I never gave up.

JE: So, here you have a plane crash and you have a suicide and a lot of people when things happen in their lives tend to blame God or that God did this to them did you ever have those feelings?

OR: Well, Jenk Jones wrote an editorial about Oral Roberts and his son that killed himself, he was questioning my faith, he jumped on me for it.

JE: That would have been Jenk Jones the publisher of The Tulsa Tribune.

OR: That's right. He wrote a very bad editorial but I said to myself, that's the way he sees it. He's got to be true to what he sees. Not what I see, and so I got over it.

JE: You didn't have this blaming God, or whoa is me, look what God did to me -

OR: No, I never blamed God for anything in my whole life.

Chapter 17 – 4:07

Meeting Presidents

John Erling: You met Presidents?

Oral Roberts: Yes.

JE: Tell us about some of them.

OR: I met President Kennedy through a friend of his and mine, an attorney, who was determined that the President would meet me. And I finally got a call from President Kennedy to come that morning on Saturday and I flew up and he was in between the Oval Office and the Cabinet Office going into a Cabinet Meeting, and he was there waiting for me. And he reached out and shook my hand. The most powerful hand shake I've ever had in my life. I almost fell down. And the first words out of his mouth, he says, "How 'bout all those people you're praying for in Maryland?" And I said, "Well, they're there and some of them are being healed." He said, "That's great." And he had me talk to him for a minute about my Crusades. I prayed with him and asked him to pray with me. And I had a wonderful time with him. The next one was Nixon. Nixon was determined that he'd see me. And I was determined he would not. He had my Senator from Oklahoma put the pressure on me. And I told him I wouldn't do it. And he came back three different times and said the President has to see you. So I flew up. I describe it in my book. And I found out what he wanted. He said he was nervous on TV, and I wasn't, and he wanted to know how I did it. I told him I was nervous too when I started. But I pictured a woman 60 years old, that I wasn't preaching to the world, I was preaching to one person on TV and I sat there and talked with her and I got over my nervousness, and he thanked me.

JE: You met other Presidents, Jimmy Carter, Gerald Ford, George Bush Senior, any stories

about those three that-

OR: Yes. Yes.

JE: Jump up?

OR: Yes sir. I met President Bush Senior. I met Carter.

JE: And that would have been Gerald Ford.

OR: Yes, I played golf with Gerald Ford several times in Palm Springs at the Club I belong to, and he was a great man. And, Jimmy Carter, I was going to Atlanta to preach in the Grace Methodist Church on a Sunday morning when he called me and asked would I stay with him in the Governor's Mansion, with him and Rosalynn, and Evelyn and I agreed. And we stayed and that night all of the children were at the table, and we were having a good time in prayer, and his son Jack accepted Jesus Christ. The next morning I went to preach and he went to teach his Bible class, and after that we were in touch quite often. When he was making up his mind to run for President he flew to Tulsa and called me, and came to the house, came in the front room, knelt, put his arms around my legs and said, "Brother Roberts, I'm going to run for President. I'm going to win. I don't know how to be President. Would you pray for me?" So I prayed for him and he left immediately and got on the plane and flew back to Atlanta. And then he called me once to the Oval Office. And the Secretary of Health and Welfare came to Tulsa and she got in with the hospital crowd that was trying to stop me from building the City of Faith. And the papers carried it, and so he called me through a friend who heard about it. And asked me to come, to bring Richard, and we went to the White House. He asked me to come into a private office he wanted to talk to me privately and let Richard talk to Rosalynn. Dr. Winslow, who was my medical Director went with me, and he had the man who was his right-hand man, from Georgia, he finally quit, but anyway, he said, "I've got my man here for Dr. Winslow to talk to." He had it all planned out. I talked with him and we never mentioned anything about anything except the general talk. And there was no more trouble from the Secretary of Health and Welfare against the City of Faith. And we never even brought it up.

Chapter 18 – 5:52

Green Family / Favorite Bible Verse

John Erling: Will Rogers, did you ever meet him?

Oral Roberts: No, I loved him but I didn't meet him.

JE: Both of you Cherokee. Do you ever see the old films of you preaching, your body is so full of electricity, vibrating. They're showing some of those on Tulsa television, and do you wonder about that, you see this man with all this energy and wondering how did I do all that?

- OR: Well. That was a period in my life. That was real, and I finally went beyond it. And had my own (inaudible) work.
- JE: So students that are listening to this, some advice for students as they prepare for their lives in any field? Or if you were a young man today in 2009 how would you prepare yourself for ministry?
- OR: I'd do the same thing I just did. 'Cause I always heard God's voice first—I know people say that God doesn't speak to people, but he spoke to me.
- JE: Who are the people that were the biggest influence in your life?
- OR: Lee Braxton, Dr. Winslow, Jimmy Buskirk, and the first Dean I had, Dr. Messick, and he was in the top 10 educators in America. And he really put the university together. He taught me how to build a university, how to run it and I learned.
- JE: As you look on your legacy would you look upon ORU as the gem of your legacy?
- OR: Yes. Yes I would. It is my legacy. And it will outlive me. It's in the best shape it's ever been now through the Greens—and it has money at last. You only had one man out there building that whole university. And when I ran out of money, I ran out.
- JE: Yeah it's Mart Green, Hobby Lobby and he was a businessman and he never really followed your ministry.
- OR: And they put in 100 million dollars so far, and they pledged their whole fortune if needed. And so ORU is safe spiritually and financially.
- JE: Forever and ever and ever.
- OR: That's right.
- JE: Right. So, as you think about the next life, what do you think you'll see when you go on to heaven? Do you have any thought about that?
- OR: Well, I'll be myself. I'm awaiting the call, I wake up some mornings and ask God, "Are you going to take me today?" And there's never been a reply. So I quit asking. And I'm just busy in my ministry.
- JE: Yeah.
- OR: And I'm awfully busy.
- JE: Now?
- OR: I've got lots of people like you coming here.
- JE: And then, as you think about the Scriptures, do you have a favorite Bible verse or verses? Are there any one or two that are your favorite?
- OR: Yes, John 10:10: The thief for the Devil cometh, not except to steal, and kill and destroy. I am come Jesus said. That you might have life and that you might have it more abundantly. That's the story of my ministry. I think that the Devil is behind all the evil in the world. And that he'll kill you if he gets a chance. He'll steal from you. He'll destroy you. But Jesus said I've come to give you life. And to give it to you more abundantly, and that's what's sold

me and that's what's kept me all through these 74 years.

JE: Well thank you for giving us this time. This is very nice of you.

OR: Yes sir.

JE: Young people and all who listen to this website voicesofoklahoma.com and-and they'll be able to hear this for a long time to come.

OR: Well, when I go back to Tulsa and meet with the students and the alumni coming in for Homecoming it's the greatest time of my life. There's been over 27,000 people come through ORU, and they're the print image of my ministry. They have character. They're the most popular people that business people hire in Tulsa. The papers carried that story. They're the best hire. They're honest. That's how we got the Greens. Are you aware of that?

JE: No, tell me.

OR: We came to the moment when I saw that Richard had served his time, and he needed to go away. He made up his mind that he had. And that God told him to go into his own ministry, which is preaching and praying for the sick. And at that time, Betty Jo mentioned a person in Oklahoma City that we didn't know about. The Greens. And he called them for us. And he came to Tulsa, David Green with Mark and his family. They came up to the house, and sat there and said what he would do. He said he would take the school on one condition. He became sold on the school through the product. He'd hired so many ORU students and they had done such a job for him that he knew that I was a man of God and that I was turning out the right kind of student. And that's why he called his family, went into the kitchen and they sat and talked and said they would do it. I agreed and I loved them then and I love them now. They gave us 70 million dollars, first gift, and he's been refurbishing the whole university. And it's in tip-top shape.

JE: Now also we can say the City of Tulsa highly regards the University as an economic impact on our town, you're one of the biggest employers in the city.

OR: Would you say finally?

JE: Finally. (Laughter) Yep, very good. Well thank you so much. This was very kind of you.

OR: Well, you're very welcome.

JE: Oklahoma has been good to so many people in Tulsa-

OR: Yes.

JE: And you've got to feel that the state was good to you.

OR: When I go back to Oklahoma, and my feet touch the ground, I know I've come home.

Chapter 19 – :18**Conclusion**

John Erling: The interview you have just heard with Oral Roberts was not intended to be all inclusive of his life, but it does preserve his voice as he talks about his humble beginnings. We encourage you to consult our For Further Reading Section about the life of a man from Pontotoc County, Oklahoma, Granville Oral Roberts.

– END –