


1978

# City of Faith Groundbreaking Chapel Transcript January 24, 1978

Holy Spirit Research Center, Oral Roberts University

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Groundbreaking Chapel 1-24-78

James Buskirk, Oral Roberts, WAS

BS: Let's come in just as quickly as possible. We're really coming in slow this morning, just as quickly as you can. It's a beautiful day to break ground, quickly as possible. If you're in the foyer, just push your way through. Nobody will be mad if you push. Come just as quickly as you can. If you're taking one step, take two. Come on in. Doubletime it. We haven't started a chapel late until today. There you go. If you're in the foyer, come on in quickly. (applause)

VOICE: Let's take our hymnals and turn to hymn number 53, Lead On, O King Eternal, certainly a great hymn of marching faith. Number 53, and let's all stand to sing.  
(Singing)

BS: Remain standing for the Scripture, which is found on page 338 in your chapel Bibles, Nehemiah, the second chapter, the 18th, 19th and 20th verses. We'll read together this most appropriate of all the Scriptures to read on this day. Page 338. Let's read altogether. "Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work. But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king? Then answered I them, and said unto them, the God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem." Let us pray together.

Almighty God, we thank You for the opportunity to be alive on this day. You've been faithful to us in our past. Every day You have crowned with Your steadfast love and righteousness. The walk of our life is a walk with You. Today in our lives we join hands with you, our God, as You walk with us through this day in our lives and as we walk with You through one more day in the life of this ministry and one more day in the life of Jesus of Nazareth, who is risen from the dead. This is the day which the Lord hast made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Jesus of Nazareth, we

follow You, You who taught us to pray, Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, amen. You may be seated.

We thought it appropriate this morning that that sound which most represents the song of this ministry be a part of this historic chapel in the life of this university and the partners of this ministry. Will you welcome Richard and the World Action Singers to chapel this morning. (applause)

WAS: (Singing) (applause)

BS: Richard and the Singers, that was great. President Roberts, we've been waiting a long time for this day and we wait upon you now to come and lead us through this day of history. Amen. (applause)

OR: Good morning. Good morning, everybody. Something good is going to happen to us today. That's right, something good. Expect God's gifts to be great in '78. Will you say it? Expect God's gifts to be great in '78. We welcome our Board of Regents, many of whom are here today in spite of weather, others who are on their way had to stop in airports, and will be here later. But a large number is present and I'd like to have them and their spouses if they are here with them to stand at this time. Would the Regents of Oral Roberts University stand and let us welcome you. Would you turn around, turn around, let the people see you. (applause) Braxton, stand up. Thank you. Thank you. We have other special guests here today. We have a couple from California, Mr. and Mrs. Bill Bone, who are great friends of the university who have flown out here for the groundbreaking, one of the most successful young businessmen in California, and a man of God, with his beautiful wife. Bill and Beverly Bone, will you stand please. We want them to welcome you to this campus. (applause) Amen. I know that my daughter Rebecca and her husband Marshall are observing us today from heaven and their dear children, our grandchildren, are here and their new parents, Marshall's brother and sister-in-law, Bill and Edna Earl

Nash, also my oldest son Ronnie, my younger daughter Roberta is in Denyer, my darling wife. I'd like for my family to stand now, including Bill and Edna Earl and the children. There they are. (applause) And there's little, and Richard and Patti. I'm sorry, Richard. I missed, missed you Richard and Patti. Patti, we're glad you're back. You just got back from Iran, right? So glad to have you back. And--(applause) And I want Jon Oral to stand up. Get up in the chair, Jon Oral. This is my little crown prince. Stand up, Jon. Wave at the crowd so they can see you. There he is. That's Rebecca's, my oldest, yea--turn him around. That's my little Cherokee Indian grandson. There he is, the little Indian. (applause) He's right here ready to go, been praying all morning, he said. He called me and wished me a happy birthday and had been praying for the groundbreaking. Jon, thank you and God bless you. Lee Braxton, the Chairman of our Board, joined us as an associated in 1949, 2½ years after we'd begun. He's been at every groundbreaking, every event of this ministry in all five continents, the man elected as a Board Chairman and is a man who left 22 corporations as a member or chairman, in order to come here as a dollar-a-year man. And we thank God for him and his lovely wife. Lee Braxton, come. (applause)

LB: Thank you, thank you, thank you. Thank you, President Roberts. This is a great occasion for us here, as it is for you and thousands and even millions of others who are thinking about us today, our partners around the world, about this great historic occasion which we have met here today. And this being my 30th year with Brother Roberts and association with this ministry, I have been at every groundbreaking that we have had and this, I think, is the greatest. I think this is the crowning jewel of this ministry, the capstone, which will complete the totality of healing of the whole man which God had called Brother Roberts to do early in the ministry. We are so delighted, I say again, to have our Regents here and some of them are sitting in airports trying to get out now. We would have had more. And they're with us in spirit, as many others are and as you are. So let's thank God for this privilege and look to God as our Source and for greater things because we are believing God for this. This groundbreaking is symbolic of our faith. When we

have a project here that we take action. I remember when we built the aerobics building. We voted on it and pledged on it in the Regent's Room and Brother Roberts said, "Let's go out and break ground." So we walked right out and broke ground for it, unexpected that day. Well, that's action that we believe in because this is God's work and we believe that God wants us to move in this day. And this being the greatest move that we've taken, single project, we believe it's going to set a pattern in this country and perhaps in this world for future institutions of this kind. We hope that it will. We hope that it will bring blessings to untold millions, even yet unborn, and we believe it will. So again, thank God for you and thank God for all of our partners and all who've helped us come this far and we know that God is our Source and He has never let us down. God bless everyone of you. (applause)

OR: I'd like for every student, faculty member, member of the administration, any part of the university now, to stand. I want the world, wherever they are, to see you right now. The greatest bunch in the world is right here. Let's give a hand to the Lord, everybody. (applause) Yea! All right, thank you. Will you shake hands on both sides and say God bless you today. Then be seated. (response) And now, for the inspirational message before the groundbreaking, the vice provost for theological affairs, Jimmy Buskirk. (applause)

JB: What do I do? Thank you. Today is such a happy occasion, as well as a significant occasion, until I may not get to preach. And really, if it were for that reason, I don't think I would complain that much. All morning I've been thinking about Jergen Moltmann in his theology of hope. In fact, he says that there is a theology of play and that Christians because they are children of the resurrection even in dark hours often have a song in their faces, on their lips, because they've got the salt of eternity in their mouths. Moltmann has described the Christian as the clown who runs along in the parade and jokes and makes fun because he knows already how the book will end and how history itself will conclude, because once again, he is a child of the resurrection. Now if we were to describe our joy and our victory today in theological terms, Moltmann might be a good instrument or vehicle by which to do that. But I think we can also describe it in children's language, and that may be even

easier. I am reminded of the little boy in a classroom one day who got so excited and so happy until suddenly he just burst it out and really disturbed all of the class and the teacher said, "You musn't do that." Oh, he said, "I'm sorry. I didn't intend to, but I smiled and my smile bursted." Today is a day for smiles bursting, because it's a day of joy and a day of happiness. But it's a day of significance, a day of importance. And let's turn to the Word now and see if we can find an anchor for that importance. We've already read from the Book of Nehemiah and I'd like to lift up just two other verses there and I can just call it to your memory. You need not turn to your, to the Word, unless you wish. We read one scripture, "We are of a mind to go up and to build." There's another that I'd like to call your attention and that is this scripture, "I'm doing a good work and will not come down." And still another, "And who am I that I should go into the temple for sanctuary? No, I will not go in."

Schopenhauer was a German philosopher known as "the apostle of gloom and of doubt and cynicism." And often he spent hours in the park at Frankfurt. Often he was unshaven, he was not dressed very well, and the park keepers wondered who this strange character was. Finally one day a caretaker walked up to him and he looked at him and he said, "Man, who are you anyway?" And Schopenhauer stood to his full tall height and glared down at his questioner and said, "Man, I wish to God in heaven I knew who I was." Well, to be sure, there are many people who do not know who they are or what they're to do. One such person did and he's Nehemiah, about whom we've read this morning. He knew who he was and he knew what he was to do. Do you remember the story? Recall it just briefly. Do you remember that he was the cupbearer to the King Xerxes. Xerxes was the king of Persia. You'll also remember that Cyrus was the king prior to Xerxes and that prior to that time Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had captured the forefathers really of this man whose name was Nehemiah. And you remember that on one occasion Nehemiah came before the king and his face was sad and he was troubled and if you took the chance of making the king sorrowful your life might be demanded. And he took that terrible chance because he allowed his feelings to show in his face and a part of the detriment of being a king was the fact that you seldom saw the honest expressions

and the real feelings of other people, but the king seeing that Nehemiah was troubled said, "Sir, why are you troubled?" Nehemiah responded by saying, "Long live the king, but my heart is vexed and I'm troubled because I've spoken to my brother who came from Jerusalem. And he tells me that the walls which Nebuchadnezzar tore down are still torn down and my people are victims of marauders and robbers as they come and go at their will. And I have wept day and night for my people. And the king of Persia said, "Well, what would you have me do about that?" And he said, "Pray sir, give me permission and give me provision so that I may go back and rebuild the wall around Jerusalem." Do you remember the king loved his cupbearer so much until he not only gave him provisions, he even gave him soldiers to carry those provisions back and also to guard him while he made his journey back. He came back to Jerusalem and it was a long way from Persia to Jerusalem. But you'll remember that he came back expecting to rally the people, but when he got there progress was not as easy as he had anticipated, for there were many who did not want progress to take place. Almost immediately they started campaigns against him. First of all you remember, they ridiculed him. They said, "Your masons are inexperienced. Why, the first time a fox runs across a wall it'll tumble and it will fall down." But Nehemiah just kept on building. Then they tried slander. They said, "Your motive must be wrong. You only came back, you had a good position there, you only came back to build this wall because you hoped to become king by the process." And if Xerxes had discovered what they were saying, perhaps Nehemiah's life would have been demanded. But Nehemiah just kept on building. And then they finally tried fear. They said, "Unless you go into the sanctuary to protect your life, you'll surely lose your life." It was against the laws for a lay person to go into the sanctuary and Nehemiah did not fall for that. He said, "I'm doing a worthy work and I will not come down." Finally he armed part of his men while the rest of them worked, and they built that wall and when they had finished building the wall Nehemiah took singers and put them on the wall and let them sing, like the World Action Singers were singing this morning, celebrating the victory so that all would know that God had built the wall. Now it's an important story. Let me draw just three things from it. First of all, Nehemiah was filled with compassion,

compassion and healing are twins. Nehemiah was concerned about his people. He said, "I weep day and night for the plight of my people." Where great healing takes place there is great compassion. I've had the privilege of going with our president to the Prayer Tower and watching him read letters until his eyes would water and most of the day and then I watched him gather up letters and gather up letters and gather up letters until he could hold no more, until they were falling and filtering and tumbling from his arms, and I watched him until he prayed until that room was filled with the Holy Spirit and every letter seemed holy. It was so bathed in compassion. Compassion and healing go together. Jesus knew that. In Matthew 14:14, the president taught us from this verse early in the semester, "Jesus saw the great multitude and had compassion and healed their sick." Compassion and healing go together. In fact, when Jesus told that story about the man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves and was wounded and robbed and left half dead, He described a levite and a priest who passed by on the other side. But then He described a certain, not a good Samaritan, a certain Samaritan who came along and picked him up and bound up his wounds and poured in oil and carried him to an inn and gave him two pence and said, "Take this, and when I return, if more has been required, I shall repay you." And attitudinally speaking, as far as attitude is concerned, that very day a groundbreaking service was held for every Christian hospital that would ever be built, for that's the foundation of it, compassion, compassion, compassion. Nehemiah had compassion. But he not only had compassion, he also had persistence. When they tried gossip, when they tried slander, when they tried fear, when they tried force, he just kept on persisting. Would you catch the vision now of a person beginning in a tent not so many years ago, a big tent, but a tent nevertheless, and then traveling full orb and full circle all the way around from a tent to a City of Faith? And that man had a dream, a dream of linking medicine and prayer together. He never lost that dream. When we saw the films in the seminars, films that were made 4½ years after he started his ministry, this man was talking about medicine and about prayer. It's no new development. It's been there all along, a strange type of wonderful God-inspired persistence. It's not enough that one man



sense that, that one man feel that, that one man be permeated with that. It must take the form of buildingblocks. We'll call it a City of Faith and hundreds of thousands must come and go and catch the vision and feel the ministry and be the recipients of that God-given dream, so that even when people turn in at the front drive and look at the City of Faith, faith itself shall well up within them and they'll say, "God is going to heal me here." That kind of persistence has now traveled full circle, all the way from the big tent back to the City of Faith with a college of arts and sciences and seven graduate schools in between. For most men it would have stopped somewhere in between, but not this man, because the Spirit was persistence, persistence, and without persistence Nehemiah would not have finished the wall. But there's one other trait there and I want to mention that and that's a trait of cooperation. While some of the builders built, the others guarded and protected. There was a spirit of cooperation. It will take multiplied thousands to do that which God has called us to do. The spirit of cooperation will have to be multiplied according to God's multiplication table so many, many times that we cannot understand it with our minds. We can only understand it with our spirits. Notice one thing about this story, have you forgotten that Xerxes, a pagan king, actually provided the materials for the wall to be built? God uses people in ministry who don't even know that they're being used. We must be ready for God's source to be ample in whatever place He sends His supplies. Not only so, as some worked and some guarded, in the spirit of cooperation it went up. The question is, what are we going to do? What's your part and what's mine? When England was on her knees, there was almost no chance, Churchill even had almost given up, there was not enough coal, not enough to make the ammunition nor to ship the same, and he called Dr. Sangster, that great minister, and said, "Can you get the coal miners together? If you get them together, there may be some chance. Get them together, let me speak to them." And Sangster contacted every coal miner that he knew and he asked them to contact everyone that he knew. And I have it from an English authority that over 2,000 coal miners came that day to hear that speech. When Churchill came, the speech was short, and this is what he said: "The enemy says that he's going to cross the channel and he may, and when he crosses the channel the Air Force will after the

war's over brag, 'We met the enemy in the air.' And the Navy will say, 'We met him on the channel.' And the infantry will say, 'We met him when he came to our banks.' Gentlemen, we need coal. We need coal to make the ammunition and to move it. What will the coal miners say?" And a big man with dark black coal soot on his face suddenly jumped to his feet and said, "My God, let me out of here, give me my shovel. I've got to go dig coal." Well, people, it's about that time. It's shoveltime. Let us out of here. Give us that shovel. (applause) It's time to break ground, but we're not doing it just in our own strength, not at all. I wonder if Richard and the World Action Singers would come back again. I want them to remind us in whose strength we're doing it. We're not doing it in our own strength. When Nehemiah had completed building the wall, he said, "Even the enemies knew that God had wrought the building." And so we close today with a message so familiar to us and so loved by us, greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

WAS: (Singing) (applause)

OR: Collins Steele will come and tell us exactly what to do, so let's remain exactly where we are and we'll move in a body and we'll go dig coal.

CS: First of all, we're going to the parking lot south of 81st Street, that's the ORA parking lot. Our guests here with the Board of Regents, we're providing transportation for you backstage. We want those of you seated to my right of this aisle to go out the door the way I'm pointing, the southeast doors. Use all of them. Turn right. Go to the Mabee Center parking lot A, make your way through the cars over by the cooling tower, straight out the driveway, across 81st Street to the ORA parking lot. There are traffic officers over there that will help you, so if you folk will go out that door when we're ready, you folk in the center and from the balcony if you'll go out the doors the way I'm pointing, the main doors, there are doors going out southeast, there are doors going out northeast, use all of them. Those of you that go out the northeast side, we want you to go across toward the LRC, get on that sidewalk and cross the creek a little farther east. Those of you in the section to

my left past this aisle, you go out the door here straight north, follow the sidewalk around on over toward the LRC and down the sidewalk there. Now there are a number of the students out there to guide you. Be careful. There is a bit of ice, but go as fast as you can. If you'll all stand, we're ready to go. You Regents will make your way backstage, we'll have transportation for you.