

# EDITOR'S NOTE

JEFFREY S. LAMP

With this issue of *Spiritus: ORU Journal of Theology*, we take opportunity to commemorate a historic moment. The year 2018 marks the centennial anniversary of the birth of Oral Roberts. It would be difficult to overstate the importance of this towering figure on the American religious landscape. He was a visionary in the truest sense of the word, and over the decades often puzzled observers as his ministry changed course, not with the times, but in many ways changing the times themselves. To be sure, it would make sense for one healed so dramatically of a debilitating disease to embark upon a healing ministry. It would also make sense for one heeled in classical Pentecostalism to be a major contributor to the direction the fledgling movement would take throughout the twentieth century. What may not seem so sensible is for one so prominent in a theological tradition caricatured, at least early on, as anti-intellectual to build a world-class university, or for one best known as a healing evangelist to build a state of the art medical facility. Yet in all of these areas, whether sensible or not, Oral Roberts was an innovator. And in this centennial anniversary of the year of his birth, *Spiritus* dedicates an issue to examine some aspects of this complex religious leader, reminding us all of the impact he made on American, indeed global, Christianity.

For this issue, Wonsuk Ma, now Dean of the College of Theology and Ministry at Oral Roberts University, has collected a dozen studies covering several areas of Roberts' life, thought, ministry, and legacy. All of the contributors have a connection to Oral Roberts University, whether as students, faculty, and/or administrators. So it is, in effect, an in-house offering to the university community and the Spirit-empowered community at large, a remembrance of a figure who, now gone, may get overlooked in today's fast-paced world of Christian theology and ministry, a world often more intrigued with "what's happening now" than with holy memory. The result, we believe, is an

even-handed and thoughtful examination of the man Oral Roberts. Indeed, this issue may serve as a primer, a textbook of sorts, on the work of the man whose life is at the foundation of the university, yet who may not be in the conscious thought of students who have passed through the doors of the university since his retirement from active ministry. I would like to thank all of the contributors to this issue, as well as the editorial staff, for their work and dedication in bringing this labor of love to fruition. May it benefit the university and the kingdom of God.

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