

Dr. William Willson on three paths to unity

Relationship, mission, spirituality

curated by Heike Vesper

On the occasion of the International Conference *Called to Hope*, promoted by Centro Uno, Dr. William Willson, president of *Oral Roberts University, Chair of Empower*, and the Pentecostal World Fellowship, addressed a vibrant greeting to the participants gathered from all around the world in person and online.

Extending his greetings "in the name of Jesus and in the love of God," Willson invoked the joy and presence of the Holy Spirit on the encounter and centered his message on the desire for unity that springs from Jesus' prayer in John 17: "That they may all be one."

On the basis of this prayer, Dr. Willson shared three fundamental convictions regarding Christian unity, convictions matured over many years of reflection and experience:

1. **Unity must first and foremost be relational.** Just as Jesus is one with the Father, Christians too are called to build authentic relationships with one another, based on God's love and truth, as part of the family of God. "I believe that out of relationship, God will help us make history for His glory," Willson said, noting that unity is born of lived relationships.
2. **Unity must be missional.** It is not enough to meet or love one another. In order to endure over time, unity needs a direction, a mission. "God calls us to be one so that the world will believe," Willson said, recalling the evangelical mandate to bring the Gospel to all peoples. Unity is not an end, but a way to make God's love visible and to work for the transformation of the world.
3. **Unity must be spiritual.** "Many forget that God's presence is required for Christian unity," Willson stressed. Otherwise, we are nothing more than a "good club trying to do something good". "But when God gets involved," he continued, "God gives a dynamic that helps unite us. It melts our hearts down together, so that we can be relational and we can accomplish God's mission."

In conclusion, Willson launched a heartfelt appeal: that the Holy Spirit gives everyone a "supernatural synergy", capable of joining forces, breaking down walls that separate, and conquering strongholds of fear and indifference. "In this best of times and worst of times, we are to share the Gospel with every nation and every person on earth," he said.

In his final wish and prayer to the participants, Willson invoked God's blessing on all: "May God unite our hearts so the world may know that Jesus is indeed alive."