

in 2006” by the readers of Church Report Magazine.

PREPARED FOR GOD’S CALLING

Joel, the son of John Osteen, a highly respected minister of the Gospel and the founder of Lakewood Church, attended Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where he studied radio and television communications.

In 1982, Joel returned to Houston and founded Lakewood’s television ministry where he produced John Osteen’s televised sermons for 17 years until January 1999 when his father passed away suddenly from a heart attack.

For many years, John Osteen encouraged Joel to preach, but he always declined preferring to work behind the scenes. But, in early 1999 Joel felt compelled to accept his father’s invitation and he preached his first sermon on January 17th of that year. Little did anyone know that would be the last Sunday of John Osteen’s life. Two weeks later, Joel began preaching and later that year was installed as the new Senior Pastor of Lakewood Church.

A NEW VISION FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM

Almost immediately, weekly attendance began to grow at an extraordinary rate and in 2005, Joel moved Lakewood Church into its present location, the former Compaq Center, a 16,000-seat arena that was once home to the Houston Rockets professional basketball team. Now, with his wife Victoria, and the leadership staff at Lakewood, the innovative church is poised for the new millennium.

Joel’s extraordinary success can be found in his core message: “That our God is a good God who desires to bless those who are obedient and faithful to Him through Jesus Christ.”

It is Joel’s deepest desire that his own life be an example of that principle and that everyone who hears this message of hope and encouragement would choose to accept God’s goodness and mercy and to become all that God wants them to be.

JOEL’S BACKGROUND

Born in Houston, Texas, Osteen married Victoria L. Iloff on April 4, 1987. They have two children, Jonathan and Alexandra.

Joel, son of John and Dolores (Dodie) Pilgrim, is one of five children. His older siblings, Paul, Lisa, and Tamara, and his younger sister, April, are also involved in full-time ministry.

Joel’s half-brother Justin does missionary work out of New York.

Joel’s father, John Osteen, a former Southern Baptist pastor who became Charismatic in the late 1950s, founded Lakewood Church on Mother’s Day, 1959.

Osteen’s father developed Lakewood into a body of approximately 6,000 members with an active television ministry, conferences, missionary support and food distribution.

Currently, Osteen and several Lakewood Church personnel travel across the nation, presenting programs in large arenas. The event, titled “A Night of Hope,” includes worship music led by the church’s music ministry, a testimony by Joel’s mother Dodie and a sermon from Osteen. In 2007, the tour expanded to include stops in several other countries, including Canada, England, Northern Ireland and Israel.

MISSION/VISION OF LAKEWOOD  
LAKEWOOD CHURCH

*Vision Paragraph:* Lakewood seeks to become a vibrant community for God growing

deeper in faith, knowledge, love and relationship with Him. We desire to express the spirit of Jesus through the individual members of the body; through uplifting public worship and intimate small group fellowship; and through committed prayer and dedication to God’s will. We strive to offer a welcoming environment for truth-seekers irrespective of knowledge, experience, and background. We want to follow God wherever He leads to make a difference in others’ lives by identifying individual talents and preparing people for kingdom service locally, nationally and globally. We desire to do this with humility and love giving God the glory!

*Community:* God wants me to be a MEMBER of His family—This is the purpose of fellowship. Following Christ is not just a matter of believing; it also includes belonging. The Christian life is not a solo act. God has given us the church as a spiritual family for our own benefit. You are members of God’s very own family . . . and you belong in God’s household with every other Christian (Ephesians 2:19).

*Loving God:* God wants me to be a MAGNIFIER of His name—We are called to worship God. O Magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together (Psalm 34:3). There is an inborn urge to worship in every human being. If we don’t worship God, we will find a replacement. We may worship our job, family, money, a sport, or even ourselves. That is why the very first commandment says, “Thou shalt have no other god’s before Me.” (Exodus 20:3)

*Loving Others:* God wants me to be a MESSENGER of His love—Once we have been born again, we become messengers of the Good News to others. It is part of the job description for every believer. For God was in Christ, restoring the world to himself, no longer counting men’s sins against them but blotting them out. This is the wonderful message He has given us to tell others. We are Christ’s ambassadors. God is using us to speak to you: we beg you, as though Christ himself were here pleading with you, receive the love He offers you—be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:19-20).

*Loving Others:* God wants me to be a MINISTER of His grace—A responsibility of every Christian is service. God expects us to use the gifts, talents, and opportunities He gives us to benefit others. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms (1 Peter 4:10).

*Imitating Christ:* God wants me to be a MODEL of his character—The goal of discipleship is becoming just like Christ. For God knew His people in advance, and He chose them to become like His Son (Romans 8:29). In 1 Timothy 4:12, Paul describes specific areas where we are to model the character of Christ . . . set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity. Notice that maturity is not measured by one’s learning but by one’s lifestyle.

USC HONORS COLLEGE NAMED  
TOP HONORS COLLEGE IN NATION

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, based upon their rigorous curriculum, retention and graduation rates, honors housing, study abroad programs, and enrichment opportunities for students, the University of South Carolina Honors College was recently named the number one honors

program by the Public University Honors organization. This achievement will be published in “A Review of 50 Public University Honors Programs” later this month.

The University of South Carolina Honors College was established in 1978 and has more than 8,000 alumni spread across the world. Since its founding, USC Honors College students have won over 363 national awards, including the Rhodes, Marshall, Goldwater, and others.

The 2011 incoming Honors College class had an average SAT score of 1427 and an average weighted GPA of 4.61. Congratulations, Dr. Steve Lynn, dean of the Honors College, and university president, Harris Pastides, on their leadership and accomplishments.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

□ 1410

CELEBRATING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF WE THE PEOPLE

(Mr. SABLAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Speaker, this year we celebrate the 25th anniversary of We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution. Since We the People began in 1987, more than 30 million high school students and 90,000 teachers have participated in this valuable program that promotes the understanding of the constitutional principles that shape and guide our Nation and instills a sense of civic responsibility in young people.

This year, more than 1,000 students from every part of our country will take part in the National Finals here in Washington. The competition will test students’ knowledge of the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights, showcasing their intelligence, determination, and teamwork.

I want to recognize 24 exceptionally talented and hardworking students from Saipan Southern High School in the Northern Mariana Islands who return to the Finals as repeat regional champions. Working together and striving for excellence are defining traits of this time. I congratulate them and their teachers and coaches, and wish them all success in this year’s We the People competition.

HONORING THE LIFE OF CHUCK  
COLSON

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, Chuck Colson, a former Nixon administration lawyer, founder of Prison Fellowship, and a good friend, passed away.

I first got to know Colson through his incredible ministry. I knew of his