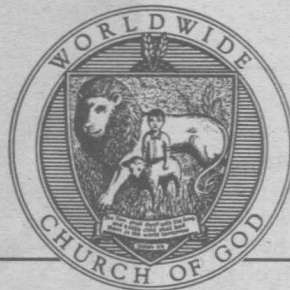


2 Unsung hero has touched the lives of hundreds of needy people

4 Why do brethren leave the Church?

8 Michelle Dodge crowned 1994 Arizona Miss TEEN

# The Worldwide News



VOL. XXII, NO. 23  
DECEMBER 27, 1994

## Estonians remote, but teach in many ways

By Victor Kubik

TARTU, Estonia—The church in Tartu is an amazing example of being remote, without a minister, yet one that's growing. It has a similarity to the early church at Rome, which also did not have a minister and yet the faith of these people was spoken of around the world (Romans 1:8).

Former German regional director John Karlson and associate pastor Wade Fransson nurtured this church, which has grown from one lone member to a group of 16 people who meet every Sabbath.

Arriving Friday afternoon, Dec. 2, I was met at the airport by Leo Kaagjärv, the first member of the Church in Estonia. He traveled by bus 200 kilometers (125 miles) from Tartu. He does this every time a minister visits, which is once every several months.

Leo and I drove 2½ hours from Tallinn to Tartu, which in Soviet times restricted access to foreign visitors because of a Soviet bomber base nearby. Tartu is also the site of Estonia's renowned university founded in 1632.

Having fled Estonia as a child, Leo in August 1990 repatriated from Aus-



**HANDS-ON APPROACH**—Estonian members have lunch at a halfway house for juveniles operated by member Anne Schotter.

tralia, where he had been a longtime Church member. He accepted a post teaching physics at Tartu University. While in Australia Leo wrote articles that were published in Estonian newspapers. One was an article about the Book of Revelation that appeared in January 1990, seven months before he moved back to Estonia. He also published two Estonian language books, one about the Sabbath and the other about the Holy Days.

When he arrived in Tartu in 1990, he placed an ad in the newspaper for an apartment. The newspaper editor

had supplied an introduction in which he wrote that Leo was expected in Tartu that autumn to lecture at the university.

A Tartu resident, Anne Schotter, recognized his name in the ad as belonging to the author of the January article that she had read. Assuming that his lectures would be on biblical subjects, Dr. Schotter contacted him on the telephone number in the ad. She told him she wanted to attend his lectures.

When he told her his lectures would be on physics and mathematics, she quickly changed her mind about coming but told him she definitely wanted to meet with him to learn more about the Bible. Leo obliged and she came along with her sister-in-law and daughter-in-law, Koidula Üprus and Fea Otter-Üprus, and son Valmar Schotter.

When Dr. Schotter wrote to ask about baptism, Mr. Karlson started to visit this group. So did Mr. Fransson. During the Days of Unleavened Bread in 1992, Koidula Üprus was baptized.

At the Feast of Tabernacles in Sweden—See Estonia, page 3

## 95 churches conduct open houses

Ninety-five U.S. congregations opened their doors Nov. 5 in the latest phase of the open house program. By the fourth Sabbath service, Nov. 26, more than 3,600 people had responded to the Church's invitation to attend services.

We are pleased with the results. First, more than 3,600 people attended services for the first time. Second, the program has positively affected our members' outlook toward new people and has led the way for further evangelism at the congregational level.

The following comments are from

pastors who conducted open house services:

**Richard Weber**, pastor of the Cookeville and Murfreesboro, Tennessee, churches: Five adults expressed interest in counseling for baptism. Our members are excited about the potential for growth through the open house program. The spiritual growth of the church has been the most exciting thing for me.

**Otto Lochner**, pastor of the Columbia, South Carolina church: A couple were surprised to find that their  
See Open house, page 8

## Update on Church buildings

By Joseph Tkach Jr.

After the February announcement about plans to construct local church buildings, there has been intense interest from ministers and members in most areas to acquire a building.

As most of you are aware, finances at this time are tight, and we can fund only a limited church-building program for the foreseeable future.

With that in mind, we surveyed pastors to find which church areas had severe hall problems. From that survey, we drew up a list of eight areas we want to concentrate on in the next year or two. The pastors in these areas

are aware of our intent to try to secure a facility for their congregation.

We are negotiating the purchase of a fine facility in Memphis, Tennessee. This is a former private school with a gymnasium, classrooms, offices, kitchen and ample land for a parking lot.

We hope to purchase this property, add a parking lot and other renovations. This facility will serve a congregation with an attendance of 330 people with ample room for growth.

This congregation has had great difficulty in securing a regular meeting place. In the 12 months before our survey, they met in about eight  
See Buildings, page 8



## Personal from...

JOSEPH W. TKACH

### The pace of change

In this letter, I want to spend some time "taking stock" of where we are as the Church of God. God has led us closer to him and given us a deeper and richer understanding of the gospel, and he continues to do so. For this we can be deeply grateful, knowing that God does not forsake or neglect his people, but works in them to strengthen them with power through his Spirit (Ephesians 3:16).

God's goal is that Christ "may dwell in your hearts through faith" (verse 17), and Paul prayed "that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God" (verses 17-19).

God is working in the Church to this end, and he expects us to respond to his loving direction. Some wish we could have a "slower pace for change." But, as the Pastor General, I cannot just say to God, in effect: "Well, God, I know you'll understand if I just keep on tolerating this error for a little while. After all, you know, the people have already had several changes, and they might not like this. They might withdraw their support. I know you have shown me it's an error, but surely you don't mind if we keep it for a while, do you?"

Please understand that I'm not making change just for the sake of  
See Personal, page 5

# Government department sings vet's praises

An unsung hero, Eleazar Benavides has touched the lives of hundreds of needy people over the years.

By Marty Ronish

ALBUQUERQUE, New Mexico—"Personal evangelism? So that's what it's called!" said Eleazar Benavides, a local church elder here. He didn't realize he was evangelizing back in the early 1970s, when he began his unusual career. Now, 20 years later, he is still evangelizing.

Last spring Mr. Benavides received the Unsung Hero award from the Department of Veterans' Affairs, honoring him for 2,057 hours during the past 14 years of volunteer service to hospitalized veterans. But the story began long before the VA hospital started keeping track of his hours in 1980.

When the *Plain Truth* newsstand program started in the early 1970s, the Albuquerque area had only about 100 subscribers. Mr. Benavides

*Marty Ronish is a member who attends the Albuquerque, New Mexico, church.*



Eleazar Benavides

benavides began distributing 2,500 *Plain Truths* per month to 26 distribution centers in New Mexico and Arizona, including the Indian reservations.

He jumped at the chance to volunteer in the VA hospital library, because it enabled him to distribute an additional 350 to 500 copies per month, just at the one hospital. When the newsstand program ended in 1986, Albuquerque had about 7,000 subscribers.

One of Mr. Benavides' assignments for the VA was to pick up

donations of books, magazines and clothing around the city and distribute them to the patients. That gave him the opportunity to get the *PT* into the hands of individuals as he distributed other magazines. "It was an open door," he said.

Stopping to chat with some of the patients on his delivery route, Mr. Benavides noticed they needed a lot of little things: haircuts, reading materials, help writing letters, someone to talk to.

They needed help filling out forms for government assistance. They needed accommodations for family members, someone to do shopping, someone to take them outside for walks. "At times they don't have anyone to talk to except for those giving medical care," he said.

Having been a long-term patient himself, Mr. Benavides knew what it felt like to be stuck, helpless, in a hospital bed. He cut hair for patients who couldn't get to the barber. He got to know the ins and outs of every imaginable source of assistance. Even today, he is able to direct brethren to the many sources of help in the community.

"The best way for someone to start helping is to go through the volunteer section, which has manuals outlining a procedure on how to go about helping," he related.

Mr. Benavides has touched the lives of hundreds of nonmembers over the years. He and his wife, Benina, who is a registered nurse, are both certified to work with the disabled. They took in an invalid Jordanian girl for several months, and they both volunteer at the Alzheimer's Association, visit people in all the hospitals in Albuquerque and give home care to people who are housebound.

"On Wednesdays we entertain at a senior citizens center with card games, puzzles and outside singing groups. On Fridays we sing to other groups," he said. "The exposure is there if you want to take advantage of it. There are needs waiting to be filled."

To most of us, giving 2,057 hours of volunteer service seems like a physical impossibility. And, yet, it represents only a fraction of the real number of hours Eleazar Benavides has given to his community.

The VA calls him an Unsung Hero, the patients see him as an angel of mercy and the Church honors him as a living example of an ambassador and evangelist for Jesus Christ.

## The Worldwide News



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## Letters

Letters for this section should be addressed to "Letters to the Editor." The editor reserves the right to use letters so addressed in whole or in part, and to include your name and edit the letter for clarity or space. We welcome your comments.

### What do you complain about?

I think that the letter in the Nov. 8 *WN* is a wonderful example to all of us worldwide. Far too often we moan and groan about tiny matters. We complain about changes in the Church, about the weather, about our neighbors and, generally, most of us have little to complain about.

Most of us have trials from time to time, but this lady has had a horrendous life but she doesn't complain about it. Rather she encourages the rest of us to get on with our lives.

She is a great example of strengthening the brethren. She thanks God for her deliverance from trial. She thanks God for giving her victory over these trials. No complaints. No "I-did-it-all-myself" attitude. She knows from whence her strength came.

So ought we all to know. If we go to God not just with our problems but with our thanks and joys too, he will bring us through life into total victory.

She obviously never gave up, never said, "Woe is me," but just got on with the job. Hers is an inspiring letter! Dear lady, whoever you are, many thanks.

Ronald McLaren  
Derbyshire, England

### Before our very eyes

I feel elated and full of thanks to our Great God and his servant Joseph W. Tkach. Indeed, for a long time, we have hoped, prayed and desired that God's work be started in Africa.

Just before our eyes, these prayers are being answered and it is amazing. However, it goes to show that God is just and does not respect persons.

We wish to assure the pastor general and the others that we fully support them, that though the work will be tedious, the resultant effects will be satisfying.

Moreover, God is capable of supplying all our needs according to his riches in Christ Jesus our Lord. Beloved, be strong and be encouraged.

Chux C. Ojinma  
Owerri, Nigeria

Celebrating 20 years

## A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF AMBASSADOR AUDITORIUM

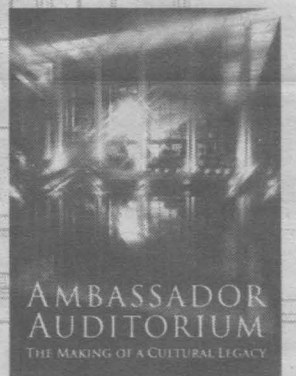
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# Pastor General visits...

WASHINGTON, D.C.



## Trip Overview

Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach spoke to 1,062 brethren Dec. 3 from Washington D.C., Central, North and Northeast; Arlington, Strasburg and Woodbridge, Virginia; Frederick, Cumberland and Fort Washington, Maryland.

Hosts for the visit were Lloyd and Malinda Garrett, Washington North and Northeast; Peter and Char Whitting, Frederick, Cumberland and Strasburg; Randy and Roberta Hall, Frederick, Cumberland and Strasburg; Arnold and Ann Hampton, Baltimore, Maryland; Doug and Martine Ruml, Arlington and Washington Central; and John and Chris Comino, Arlington, Washington Central, Fort Washington and Woodbridge. [Photos by Kevin Pierce]



## Estonian halfway house helps youths mainstream back into society

Continued from page 1

den that year, Dr. Schotter, Fea Otter-Üprus and two others, Merli Tähnäs and Terje Pruks, were baptized by Karl Karlov, Leo Kaagjärv's brother, who pastors our Penrith and Bathurst congregations in Australia. I baptized three more at the Feast this past year in Sweden.

### Founded on Christian principles

Dr. Schotter, who has a Ph.D. in experimental neurology and for years has performed medical research at Tartu University, operates a halfway house to help youths become mainstreamed into society. The Tartu Shelter for Juvenile Delinquents Christian Home helps young men released from prison through psychological and social rehabilitation for six to 18 months.

The building has been nicely renovated through the direction of Dr. Schotter. Walking inside, you immediately notice the uplifting environment, beautifully varnished floors and tasteful pictures.

In December 1989 Dr. Schotter received permission from the government to restore an old uninhabitable house for this purpose. She received support from the Estonian Ministry of Education, the Tartu city government and companies, including Nordic Blue Band and Blue Cross Union.

On behalf of the Church, Mr. Karl-

son also offered to help by repairing the roof, paying a small salary for a cook and donating a computer through which electronic mail contact is maintained on Internet. The



**AMONG FRIENDS**—Victor Kubik (left) with Anne Schotter, who runs a halfway house, and Leo Kaagjärv, the first member in Estonia. [Photo by Merli Tähnäs]

house was opened March 14, 1993.

It was not easy to restore the old building. To connect with the city's central heating, pipes had to be placed in the middle of a narrow street with dangerous electric lines on both sides. When work was done, the foreman said even the workmen believed they did their job under God's protection. In addition, she never was charged for the work, valued at 30,000 Russian rubles.

Dr. Schotter works on the family principle of developing close individ-

ual relationships. She helps the young men go to school, find work and find apartments and reestablish contacts with relatives. The boys are taught responsibility by cleaning, doing laundry, ironing, doing repair work and cooking. Also, she fills out the residents' life with sporting and cultural events.

During the past year and a half of operation, 11 young men have lived in the shelter and none have returned to a criminal life-style.

She also has counseled 100 short-term clients who have stayed from periods ranging from two days to two weeks. Finally, the house is home to all church events, including Sabbath services, Bible study and an office. Boys are welcome to services and some attend regularly. On this trip I baptized one of them.

When I arrived Sabbath morning a common room was set up for services. Sixteen people were present. I played the piano for hymns, while Valmar Schotter led songs. I then spoke about Christian commitment and responsibility. After the service I ordained Leo Kaagjärv as a deacon.

When there is no minister, Leo translates English sermon tapes into Estonian. On my visit I spoke in English because not everyone understands Russian, including Leo.

After the service we had a lunch prepared by one of the members, Eda Täheväli. Afterward, I counseled with people for several hours, mostly in Russian.

Growth in this expanding church continues as members invite new people. The church in Tartu has increased through word of mouth and the community service rendered by this halfway house.

### Efforts to rebuild

The Estonians are a mix of people who are similar to the Scandinavians in temperament yet have lived under heavy Russian rule for half a century. They are now trying to reestablish themselves as an independent nation and rebuild their economy. There is still a great distrust and fear of the overshadowing Russians.

Russians comprise half the population of Tallinn, the capital city. Of 1.5 million people in Estonia, about half a million are Russians, and you hear their language loudly spoken on city streets. Many of them do not even know the Estonian language. The Estonians consider them colonists whom they would prefer to see leave their country.

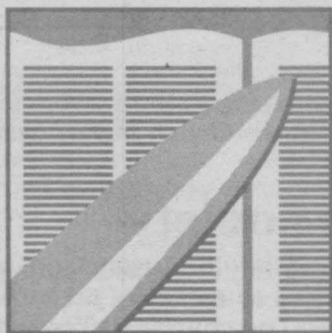
After Estonians declared their independence in August 1991, they insisted on minimal levels of literacy in Estonian as a condition for citizenship. Through this means they hope to defend their culture and way of life against Russification.

From Estonia I left for South America where I joined Randal Dick, assistant director of Church Administration International, to visit our churches and other Sabbatharians in Uruguay.

# IRON SHARPENS IRON

so one man sharpens another.

Proverbs 27:17—As iron sharpens iron,



## Why do brethren leave the Church?

By Alan Dean

Over the years members have left the Church for a variety of reasons. There is no one reason why people leave. Many times the reasons conflict with one other. We are all different. We come from different backgrounds, have different personalities, experiences and training. What is important to one person is not to another, and vice versa.

We are warned in 1 Corinthians 10:12 to take heed lest we fall. It is possible for any of us to lose our direction. Let's look at some reasons why people have left the Church.

### Offenses

We all come into the Church with high expectations. We struggle to hold on to those hopes and standards, albeit tempered with reality. Christ warned that it is possible to be offended (Matthew 18:6-7). We can be dissuaded by other people's conduct. An idealist can have high expectations but find human behavior upsetting. Hurts can throw sensitive people off-balance.

Some have been offended by perceived or real wrongs in others. Ministers who were too authoritarian, or too loose. Members who gossiped or were rude. Immorality, misuse of money, extravagance, have also offended, whether real or based on slander. Such people allow the Perfect (God) to be devalued by the imperfect (human).

Over the years the Church has made modifications to its understanding of doctrine and its application. It is sometimes difficult to alter long-held views. Why? Because change can unsettle us. It takes away a certainty. If we are not careful we see change not positively, as becoming closer to the truth, but negatively, as losing truth.

Members have left over changes in doctrine and administration, and some have left when change did not come. In the 1970s people became upset over changing Pentecost to Sunday. Others left because the Church did not change divorce and remar-

*Alan Dean pastors the Toowoomba and Warwick, Australia, churches.*

riage when they wanted, while others left when it was changed. Some left when makeup was not allowed and others left when it was allowed.

They lost faith that Christ will lead the Church to a fuller understanding of truth. It takes time and it takes experience to finely tune truth.

It is unsettling when an expectation seems to be further off than first thought. That's especially true of prophecy. When one's personal, prophetic position is wrong it can cause disappointment, even cynicism.

Some have left over the failure of dates. Others have left over the failure of their chronological list of end-time events. It is reassuring when it all seems so close, clear and certain. Some leave holding on to old ideas because to admit error is too frightening. To reinforce their position they will develop even further prophetic scenarios.

Some left over others being too dogmatic over prophecy, forgetting the warnings replete in the New Testament of not becoming cynical toward the reality of Christ's return. They allowed speculations to detract from the prophetic realities of Christ's return and the resurrection of the dead.

The Church has the authority to teach and administer policies. Some were offended by counseling they received. Some resist the concept of the Church found in Hebrews 13:17.

Others have parted because they perceived the ministry had gone soft. They wanted the ministry to live people's lives for them, make decisions for them and correct members more severely. Those who resist the authority of the Church forget the admonition of Hebrews 13:17, to obey those who rule over you.

We are all imperfect and are struggling with our natures, waging a constant battle to fight human nature. It can be tiring and discouraging.

Some give up. Working on long-term problems can seem no longer worthwhile. It seems more attractive to float down the river, rather than fight to swim against the current. Others really want to sin and just stop the pretense and let loose.

These brethren don't see how hurtful sin is, and they have underestimated the power available to liberate

them from these vices.

A saying goes, "Been there, seen that, done that," which sums up members bored with the Church. Everything becomes routine, predictable, ho-hum. The excitement that greeted them when they came to Church is gone.

They have gone on autopilot. Human nature loses excitement with anything not rekindled. Habit takes over and familiarity breeds contempt.

Such members then find Sabbath services irrelevant, Bible study meaningless and prayer futile. Soon they drift off, looking for some new experience, forgetting Paul's warnings not to grow weary in well doing. We need to stir up the Spirit to recapture our first romance with the truth.

### Doctrinal superiority

A few have felt superior to the Church. They, not the Church, are the repository of truth. On one hand the authoritarian carves a theology of dogmatism, specifics and dire warnings. On the other, the liberal styles a religion on feeling good and minimizing rules, standards and authority. Some develop a fantasy world of prophetic self-importance or speculations.

They forget that Christ works through his Church and not through lone rangers.

Occasionally critics enter the Church. From the time they start attending they herald opinions on how the Church should be run. Sometimes they are right, which only emboldens them to further attack. Soon they feel that they are more righteous than the Church. They leave to join other groups.

We need to have teachable hearts and let Christ reeducate us to his ways. The critics, however, come with fixed positions and are unteachable.

Do we have meaningful, living relationships with God? Do we see Christ as the head of the Church? Is our faith anchored on the foundation of Christ?

We need to take heed to the warning in 1 Corinthians 10:12: "If you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!" We need to know ourselves and avoid being seduced into believing we are more righteous than the Church.

## A question for Christians: 'Are you worth your salt?'

"Men like him are the salt of the earth—where would we be without them?" My attention was directed to a man putting up tables and chairs in readiness for a church activity.

When we apply the phrase "salt of the earth" to people, we mean they are reliable people who get the job done, who put themselves out for others, whose lives show goodness, reliability, love.

Such people would be surprised to hear themselves described as "the salt of the earth" because they consider they are doing what they should. Without thinking about it, they love their neighbors as themselves.

How are we described? Jesus taught that his followers must be the "salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13).

Because we live for God, our lives ought to make a difference in society. "Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that ... they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us" (1 Peter 2:11).

Jesus said people do not "light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16).

We are not called to fit in, to be like everyone else—we are called to live Christlike lives.

Paul wrote: "Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone" (Romans 12:17-18).

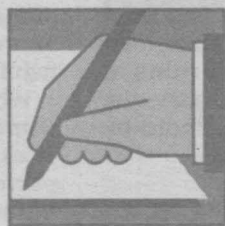
These verses summarize the core of Christian living. Yet, how is it possible to live at peace with everyone and be the salt of the earth? The Christian life seems a paradox.

Consider, however, some of the qualities of salt. It can be an irritation. If too much salt is put on food it is unpalatable. If salt gets in an open wound it hurts.

Similarly, while we must not compromise our calling so that our behavior is indistinguishable from unbelievers, making us of no use to God (Luke 14:34), neither should our Christlike life be unnecessarily dis-

perservative qualities of salt.

Those whose lives are like salt, however, may be persecuted for their actions. "In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and



## Just One More Thing

DEXTER FAULKNER

tasteful. Christian behavior must be such as to make the gospel message exciting to others, not an annoyance.

Christians cannot just sit back and let society spoil. We have a part to play by setting an example of a Christlike life, influencing others by acts of kindness, love and mercy. Such behavior demonstrates that change is coming, and has already begun. In this way we act like the healing and

impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of" (2 Timothy 3:12-14).

Salt has no exciting feel to it. Only when it is missing do we recognize its worth. Christ says his followers must be the "salt of the earth." He will give us the strength to be Christians worth our salt for a world that needs saving.

# Personal: changes take courage and conviction

Continued from page 1

change. But as I feel Christ leads the Church, I cannot continue a teaching I feel he has led us to understand is erroneous. This is especially true as we grow in our depth of understanding regarding our Lord and Savior and our real commission to preach the gospel as revealed in the Scriptures.

The Sanhedrin and Jewish leaders did not like Peter's pace with his "offensive" message, either. They wanted him to just "cool it." They even beat him and the other apostles for it. But he declared, "We must obey God rather than men."

And what was it that they were determined to obey God in doing, even against the orders and anger of their opponents? What was it that was so offensive, so foreign to the Jewish leaders' Old Testament ears? It was the preaching about Jesus Christ—who he is, what he has done and what he offers (Acts 5:27-32).

## It is here God has given us the task of doing his work

It is discouraging that some in the Church are offended at this message—the very gospel itself. It is as if some may have never realized what the gospel really is and are now becoming "upset," "confused" or "disturbed" because the Church is preaching it. They see certain changes that are made, focus on those changes, and lose the real

emphasis we are trying to make—that the New Testament Church was given the ongoing commission to preach the very thing we have been trying to emphasize in recent years.

What did Jesus tell the disciples in Luke 24:44-48? What did Paul say constitutes the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:1-8? What were Peter's sermons about? What was the point of Stephen's sermon? What were Paul's sermons about?

When you read these verses it should be impossible to say, as some have, "All this Jesus stuff is just a passing fad the Church is going through." Some (and I hope it is mainly those who have already left our fellowship) have felt that the "real meat" of the word is understanding the identity of modern nations and "getting out the warning message" about the rise of the beast power in Europe and the destruction and captivity of the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia and other nations. Can't we see that this is not the gospel?

I can begin to identify with Paul's indignation when he wrote to the Galatians: "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eter-

nally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!

"Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still

**We have always emphasized taking time to study, pray and prove all things. In my own case, I have to deal with the understanding of change just as you do. I have to be sure this is the way Christ is leading us.**

trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ. I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up" (Galatians 1:6-11).

Some people seem to think this gospel is something we are preaching just so we can be "accepted" by other churches. But God has given us the gospel, and he expects us to spread it just as he gave it. Paul said he was not ashamed of it, but it seems that some of us may be.

Should we shrink back from preaching the gospel of the Scriptures simply because we find that other churches also preach it? Should we fail to preach what God commands simply because we find that some people put the message in a bad light by their poor conduct? Should we tell God that we'd rather preach something else, something a little different but close to what he has commanded?

No, we must not be ashamed of the gospel, "because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16). Let's get back to basics. God has called us to do his work. That work is to spread the good news about Jesus Christ the Savior and his kingdom. He called us into fellowship together to do that job and to nurture and minister to one another in the faith (Ephesians 4:16).

He called us here, into the Worldwide Church of God. It is here that he opened our minds to the gospel, brought us to repentance, gave us new life in Christ by his Holy Spirit, cleansed us from sin and reconciled us to himself. It is here, in the Worldwide Church of God, that he has given us the task of doing his work, and it is here that he expects us to do it. God places people in the Body of Christ as it pleases him, and it pleased him to place us here.

God has brought us together for his purpose, and it is not up to us to say to God: "I don't like where you've placed me. I'd rather do your work somewhere else, some place I'll choose for myself."

Once a person becomes a converted Christian, there is only one valid reason to leave the particular fellowship into which God placed him or her—if that fellowship does not love, honor, glorify, praise, follow, worship, obey and preach Jesus Christ. But, amazingly, the reason some have left the Church in past months is that we *do* preach Jesus Christ! That is the reason to *stay*, not the reason to leave.

## The Worldwide Church of God a church of growth and love

Brethren, I know the changes we have introduced have not always been easy. Many of you have quickly seen some of our misunderstandings. Most of you have rejoiced over our spiritual growth in love and understanding and have appreciated the move away from legalism and shuffling toward grace and shepherding. Of course others have been slow to see the need for changes or the reasons behind them. We have always emphasized patience and taking time to study, pray and prove all things.

In my own case, I have to deal with the understanding of change just as you do. I have to study and pray just as you do. I have to be sure this is the way Christ is leading us. I am far from perfect, just as we all are. But with all my heart I want to follow the lead of Jesus Christ. I want the Worldwide Church of God to be a Church of growth and love, and a Church that fulfills Christ's will. I want us to be a Church that preaches Christ's true gospel to the world.

Let's all pray that God will give us the courage, conviction and clarity to stand on the Word of truth, to see our job in Christ's service as the apostles did. Let's pray for each other and for the strength we all need to move forward in Jesus Christ. Let's stand with Paul in not being ashamed of the gospel of our Lord and Savior, and let's put our hearts into doing our Father's business.

## Questions & Answers

FROM THE PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

### Does Psalm 111:9 mean that we cannot call anyone "reverend"?

The King James Version says, "holy and reverend is his name," but this does not mean that "reverend" is a proper name of God. Rather, it means that we should revere or greatly respect God.

The New International Version says, "holy and awesome is his name." Others say that his name is "to be feared." Although "awesome" accurately describes God, it is permissible to use "awesome" for people and other things, too.

Likewise, "reverend" is not a sacred term restricted to God alone. The King James Version says that a wife should "revere" her husband (Ephesians 5:33)—that is, to revere him or greatly respect him. He would be reverend to her, and she could call him "Lord."

People use many courtesy titles to indicate respect: Your Majesty, Your Highness, Most Honorable, Lord, Doctor, Monsieur, etc. Each of these titles belongs most properly to God, but they may also be used for humans.

Likewise, reverend is a customary courtesy title for pastors in some denominations. Like the word *sir* or *mister* (from "master"), it shows respect, not worship. We do not want to use "reverend" for pastors in the Worldwide Church of God, but we do not prohibit its use for others.

### The November-December Plain Truth calls a Catholic priest "Father Tom." Does this violate Matthew 23:9?

This verse tells us, "Do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have

one Father, and he is in heaven." Literally, this would mean that we could not call our male parent "father," and a superficial reading of verses 8 and 10 would make us avoid the use of "Rabbi," "Teacher" or "Master" in reference to any human.

We have rightly understood that Jesus did not forbid all uses of these words. To see what Jesus meant, we need to examine the intent of what he said.

In Matthew 23:1-12, Jesus was telling his disciples and the public about the vanity of the scribes and Pharisees. He noted that they loved publicity, honor and flattering titles, and they seemed to demand undue adoration from their followers. Jesus told the people that they should not give such adoration, nor should they demand it of others. They were to have a different attitude.

Human beings are fallible, and the Pharisees were just as human as anyone else. Since they were religious leaders, their teachings were to be respected, but they themselves were not worthy of adoration. Jesus taught his followers not to give anyone adoration that would exalt a person to near-divine status and to avoid titles that suggested adoration.

But respectful titles may be used, as Luke did when referring to Theophilus and Paul did when addressing government officials. We may call kings Your Majesty, barons Lord, U.S. senators Honorable, etc., as custom indicates. These do not indicate adoration or worship, and the meaning is automatically limited when the title is used for a human.

Although we would consider some religious titles to be excessive, others are biblical: Elder Smith, Pastor Jones, Bishop Brown.

"Rabbi" is likewise a respectful and customary religious title that we have used for decades. It acknowledges the person's function in his or her community without suggesting the adoration that it did in the minds of the Pharisees in first-century Palestine. However, some Christians today, especially those from Jewish backgrounds, may prefer to avoid the title if it conveys to them an inappropriate reverence. Other Jewish Christians may find that the title is not a problem.

Similarly, some Christians today find that the religious title "Father" offends their conscience because of their personal experience with the term. They may have ascribed a worshipful status to people with that title, and it may be necessary for them to avoid it. It would be a sin for them to use the term, for it would violate their own beliefs. Their own experience and conscience form an environment in which the term would be "not of faith" (Romans 14:23).

But the title itself is not wrong. In the *Plain Truth* article, for example, the word "Father" indicates the man's role in the community. He is a priest, and the community knows him by the name "Father Tom." The *PT* article put his title in quote marks, indicating that the title is not our own invention but is used by the community. There is also a play on words, since the man serves as a surrogate father to the children he serves. We respect the man's work, which is done in association with his title, and our use of his title did not ascribe any religious authority or reverence to him. It did not violate the spirit of Jesus' commandment in Matthew 23.



North Carolina, celebrated their 30th anniversary Nov. 7. They have two sons, Mark and Michael; two daughters, D'Etta and Aletha; two daughters-in-law, Michelle and Teresa; two sons-in-law, Terry Elliott and John Fox; and three grandchildren, Benjamin Wise, Haley Elliott and Sean Fox.



**JOHN & HEATHER ATKINS**

John and Heather Atkins of Southend-on-Sea, England, celebrated their 25th anniversary Sept. 13. They have a son, Christopher.



**JAMES & RITA SAMPSON**

James and Rita Sampson celebrated their 25th anniversary Sept. 23. They have three children, Sandra, James and Glenn; and a son-in-law, David. Mr. and Mrs. Sampson serve as deacon and deaconess in the Pasadena A.M. church.



**GEOFFREY & MARGARET MUKINDIA**

Geoffrey and Margaret Mukindia of Kibirichia, Kenya, celebrated their 26th anniversary Sept. 20. They have four children, Samuel, Lucy, Samson and Daniel; and a daughter-in-law, Kinya.

## Anniversaries Made of Gold

Eugene and Dorothy Woodel of Alexandria, Louisiana, celebrated their 50th anniversary Oct. 22. They have four daughters, Patsy, Helen, Ella and Dotti.



**BILL & MABLE COPENHAVER**

Monroe "Bill" and Mable Copenhaver of Leander, Texas, celebrated their 63rd anniversary Aug. 17. They have a daughter, Joyce; a son, Woody; four grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.



**FRED & IVY SMITH**

Fred and Ivy Smith celebrated their 55th anniversary June 15. They have two children, Pamela and Graham (deceased); a son-in-law, Malcolm Toms; two grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.



**MEL & EDNA MAYBERRY**

Mel and Edna Mayberry of Edmonton, Alberta, celebrated their 50th anniversary July 15. Mr. and Mrs. Mayberry serve as deacon and deaconess in the Edmonton South church.



**VERNON & WILMA TEMPLE**

Vernon and Wilma Temple of Everett, Washington, celebrated their 50th anniversary Oct. 19. They have two children and six grandchildren.

## Obituaries

JARLSKOV, Ellen, 98, of Middelfart, Denmark, died Nov. 28. She is survived by one sister, five children, several grandchildren, great grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.

WEBSTER, Adelaide M., 91, of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, died Aug. 28. She is survived by two sons, John

and Robert; a daughter, Margaret Stumpf; a son-in-law, Richard; and two sisters, Clara Gast and Margaret Christensen. She was preceded in death by her husband, Herbert.



**PEARL SHARP**

SHARP, Pearl Cooper, 100, of Springfield, Missouri, died Aug. 2. She is survived by one son, two daughters, 11 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren and seven great-great-grandchildren.

STANSBURY, Daisy, 88, of Sioux City, Iowa, died Nov. 6 after a long illness. She is survived by her husband, Ezra; two sons, Leo Lyman and his wife, June, and Gerald Lyman; a stepson, Dennis Stansbury and his wife, Lena; a stepdaughter, Judi Kalvelage and her husband, Glenn; a daughter-in-law, Terry Lyman; a brother, Sam Mead; two sisters, Mary Horsley and her husband, Harold, and Rose Leonard; and several grandchildren, step-grandchildren, great-grandchildren and step-great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her first husband, Arthur Lyman; a son, Darrell Lyman; a grandchild; four brothers; and five sisters.

BIRKELAND, Johanne, 87, of Ski, Norway, died Oct. 19. She is survived by nieces, nephews and cousins.



**STAN GUSTAFSON**

GUSTAFSON, Stan, 82, of Springfield, Missouri, died Aug. 10. He is survived by his wife, Marion; two sons; one stepson; and one stepdaughter.

WEEKS, Catheryn Croom, 80, of Davis, California, died June 20 of a stroke after a long illness. She is survived by her husband, Jim.

KRATZ, Ella M., 79, of Royersford, Pennsylvania, died Nov. 16 of cancer. She is survived by three daughters, E. Jane Buckwalter, Irene Kratz and Betsy Cauffman; four sons, Warren, Franklin, Richard and J. Barry; two brothers, Irvan and John Hillagass; 17 grandchildren; and 13 great-grandchildren.

WOODS, Scotty H., 77, of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, died April 14. He is survived by his four daughters, Robin Pagan, Catherine Williams,

Rosalind Boyd and Paula Bowers; a son, Scottie Harold Bowers; Eliza Burton, the mother of his children; and by nine grandchildren.



**AENID STRNAD**

STRNAD, Aenid, 81, died Oct. 20 of complications from pneumonia. She is survived by a son, Ron; a daughter, Dorothea Kruger; a daughter-in-law, Hope; and four grandchildren, Jody Swanson, Jacob Kruger and Sheila and Justin Strnad. She was preceded in death by her husband, Victor.



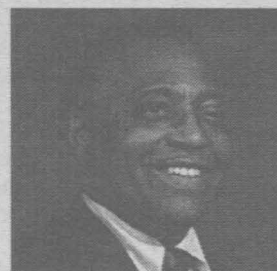
**LENA VIOLA**

VIOLA, Lena, 81, of Tallahassee, Florida, died Nov. 2. She is survived by her husband, Pete N.; four daughters, Antonia Munsey, Joan Palumbo, Barbara Sullivan and Lorraine Fast; three sisters, Settie Furiosi and Earnestine and Jenny Cantafio; 13 grandchildren; and 23 great-grandchildren.



**RAYMOND & MARJORIE OLSEN**

OLSEN, Raymond Calvin, 71, of Oakdale, California, died Oct. 19 of a heart attack. His wife, Marjorie Earlene, 71, died unexpectedly Oct. 27. They are survived by their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.



**CHARLES CLARK**

CLARK, Charles Sr., 70, of Mem-

phis, Tennessee, died Nov. 3. He is survived by his wife, I.V.; a son, Charles Jr.; four daughters, Ivon, Joan, Rose Douglas and Mona Bland; a daughter-in-law, Dyann; two sons-in-law, Harold Douglas and Edgar Bland; two sisters; and seven grandchildren. Charles and I.V. had been married 47 years and six months.

WEST, Mary, 75, of Williamston, Michigan, died Nov. 18. She is survived by her husband, Wilbur; four children, Larry, Rosalie, Wendell and Darrell and their spouses; 12 grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

BAUMGARTNER, Edward, 75, of Hinsdale, Illinois, died Nov. 18. He is survived by his wife, Adeline; two sons; and two grandsons.



**LORETTA KNUIT**

KNUIT, Loretta, 67, of Westwood, British Columbia, died of cancer Oct. 10. She is survived by her husband, Hank; four children; and numerous grandchildren.

CASSEL, Marlyn, 59, of Hatfield, Pennsylvania, died of cancer Oct. 17. He is survived by his wife, Jewel; a daughter, Jenifer; and a son, Benjamin.

PEACOCK, Julia, 55, of Port Huron, Michigan, died Nov. 16. She is survived by six children.



**FAYE ORCHARD**

ORCHARD, Faye, 54, of Ballarat, Australia, died of cancer Nov. 3. She is survived by her husband, Bob; a daughter, Sue; a son, Ben; a son-in-law, Paul; a daughter-in-law, Rae-lene; and four grandchildren, Dave, Matt, Sallyanne and Amy.

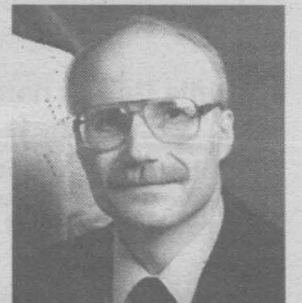
BONSEY, Carol, 49, of Middletown, Connecticut, died July 5. She was a deaconess in the Hartford, Connecticut, church. She is survived by her husband, Richard; a daughter, Kimberly; her parents, Henry and Gerda Blohm; and a brother, Erich Blohm.

NEUENDORF, George A., 47, of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, died Nov. 2 after a long struggle with diabetes-related health problems. He is survived by his wife, Mary; a stepson, Chris; his mother, Eunice; a sister, Eileen Eckles; a brother-in-law; two nephews; and many other family members.



**ANN GROFT**

GROFT, Ann, 48, of Houston, Texas, died of cancer Sept. 18. She is survived by her husband, Thomas R.; five children, Derin Borjorguez, Anita Solis, Kelly, Daniel and Jonathon Groft.



**THOMAS LANGDON**

LANGDON, Thomas L., 44, died unexpectedly June 25. He is survived by his wife, Beth; a daughter, Sherry Rebecca; a brother, James Clark; a sister, Linda Ann Moynihan; two nephews; and a niece.



**AAD SMIT**

SMIT, Aad, 44, of Culemborg, Netherlands, died Oct. 4. He is survived by his wife, Corrie; a son, Michiel; and a daughter, Arianne.

VAN LANDUYT, Sheila, 25, of Temple City, California, died Oct. 9. She is survived by a daughter, Gina, 5; her parents, Larry and Judy; three sisters, Sharina, Chantel Scott and Christine Marquez; and by her grandparents, Russel and Jean Van Landuyt.

that his first priority would be to promote Big Sandy as a location for new businesses, emphasizing that the presence of AU makes the city a college town, a feature that typically attracts businesses.

In November Mr. Delamater was named to the executive committee for the Educational & Cultural Organizations section of the Public Relations Society of America.

### Music department chair defends dissertation

Ross Jutsum, chair of the Music Department, defended his doctoral dissertation Nov. 22, completing the requirements for a doctor of musical arts degree at the University of North Texas in Denton. He will receive the degree May 13.

### Sports update

AU's basketball season began Nov. 12. As of Dec. 15, the Lady Royals have a record of 7-3. The men's team has a record of 4-3.



# Dateline: Ambassador

AN UPDATE OF AMBASSADOR UNIVERSITY

### Internet leads AU onto information superhighway

AU's Information Systems & Services (ISS) Department is moving forward to establish full connection with the Internet. The connection will occur in three phases.

The Internet is a hierarchical assembly of many individual campus, state, regional and national computer networks into one worldwide logical network.

The U.S. Defense Department began a high-speed computer communications network known as ARPAnet, whose success attracted other networks, now known

collectively as the Internet.

Full access to the Internet allows users to enjoy services such as remote login (enabling a user at one site to interact with a computer at another site as if directly connected), file transfer and electronic mail. In addition, users have access to innumerable information sources around the world. A computer program known as a *gopher* enables Internet users to retrieve this information.

As part of the first phase of Ambassador's connection, the university has already established a contract with Netcom, a large Internet service provider. The second phase will extend full Inter-

net services to the faculty and staff. In phase three, Internet will be offered to the student body.

ISS is also working toward extending AU's Campus-Wide Information Systems to a gopher server, which would enable campus users to connect to Internet gophers and resources around the world.

It will also be accessible for other worldwide Internet users such as AU alumni, family members, prospective students and other campuses with Internet connections.

### AU installs English honors society chapter

AU installed a chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, the English

honors society, Nov. 12.

AU's chapter is sponsored by **John Beaver**, chair of the English Department. Sigma Tau Delta encourages academic and personal excellence among students of English.

Members can apply for scholarships and be published in the society's literary magazine.

### Administrator named president of Big Sandy Chamber of Commerce

Thomas R. Delamater, director of Institutional Advancement, was elected president of the Big Sandy Chamber of Commerce for 1995 Dec. 8. Mr. Delamater said

# Update

NEWS OF PEOPLE, PLACES AND EVENTS

zona Miss TEEN (Teens Encouraging Excellence Nationally) July 29. Next June Michelle will appear in the national Miss TEEN pageant in Minneapolis, Minnesota.



Michelle Celeste Dodge

Michelle received first-place trophies for community service and academic achievement, and a first place plaque for her financial contribution to the pageant charity Reading Is Fundamental. Michelle ma-

## Michelle Dodge named Miss TEEN Arizona

GLENDALE, Arizona—Michelle Celeste Dodge was crowned the 1994 Ari-

jors in architecture at the University of Arizona.

## Member in Nebraska receives fellowship for graduate study

NORTH PLATTE, Nebraska—Glady Maring attended a four-week institute on the U.S. Constitution in July in Washington, D.C., as the sole James Madison Fellow from the state of Nebraska for 1993.

The James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation annually solicits applications from college seniors and experienced teachers in the fields of history, government and social science. One fellow is selected from each state.

The fellowship foundation funds up to \$24,000 of each fellow's course of study toward a master's degree that must include a concentration of courses on the history and principles

of the U.S. Constitution.

Glady and her husband, Marvin, have two sons, Dewey and Brian.

## Los Angeles church to mark 35th anniversary in August 1995

LOS ANGELES—The Los Angeles church will celebrate its 35th anniversary Aug. 26. Afternoon services will be followed by dinner and a dance that evening.

A guest speaker is planned as well as comments from ministers who have served in the area. A historical overview of the congregation and entertainment will be presented during the evening.

Former Los Angeles ministers and those who have attended the congregation are invited to attend. For more information please contact Jack or Gail Kessler at 1-310-474-1709. Curtis May.

## Young people put on musical of small packages in Wisconsin

KENOSHA, Wisconsin—Family and friends of Church members, as well as members of the public, were invited to a musical production by the Kenosha church Nov. 6.

The musical, titled *Good Kings Come in Small Packages*, performed by 36 children ages 5 to 13, was about Josiah, who was 8 years old when he became king of Judah.

"It was a fun-filled musical evening for about 350 people in attendance," said Donna D. Myers, Kenosha and Milwaukee West children's choir director.

## For the record

Ismael Beloso Jr.'s name was incorrectly spelled in the Nov. 8 *Worldwide News* item on valedictorians.

## Open house: People feeling more at home

Continued from page 1 mates were friends or employees of some of the members. One woman met a member and said: "Your voice is so familiar. Have I met you?"

They talked and found that her husband was the manager of a business that the member worked for. She said: "Well, next week I'm going to bring my husband. He's made comments about you and your church."

Now their friendship involves religion too. The open house has electrified members and created a new closeness.

Robert Persky, pastor of the Bowling Green, Kentucky, and Clarksville, Tennessee, churches: New people are feeling and acting more and more at home. Several have asked for baptismal counseling.

Everyone we talked to said they were coming back. Open house is the best thing that has happened in a long time.

John Knaack, pastor of the Cedar Rapids and Davenport, Iowa, churches: The brethren were excited by the enthusiasm of the new people. Most stayed around after services to fellowship.

Open house is an excellent vehicle to reach people in this part of the country. Many prefer to come without first having to make direct contact with the church pastor, which some view as a screen to determine whether they are suitable to attend services. Whereas the invitation, which lists time and place of services, allows people to attend without feeling screened or pressured.

One guest said he was

excited to be invited to the Church. He has been a co-worker for more than 20 years and had been waiting for this day for a long time.

## Why have open house?

Conducting an open house is an opportunity for non-members to attend Sabbath services. The purpose is to generate interest and introduce guests to basic topics centered on Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God. Invitations are mailed to *Plain Truth* subscribers, and pas-

New Attendees		
Statistics for the first four phases of open house in the United States:		
Phase	Churches	New Attendees
I	4 (June 1993)	168
II	8 (November 1993)	871
III	45 (May 1994)	2,952
IV	95 (November 1994)	3,698*
Totals :	152	7,689*

\* preliminary totals

tors encourage members to invite people.

The program provides the

congregation with a sharper focus on hospitality and welcoming new people. This emphasis strengthens the involvement and commitment of many who are already attending, and it provides a boost for the congregation.

The Church will conduct three phases of open house in the United States in 1995.

## Buildings: a long-term goal

Continued from page 1

different halls and were away from their regular hall 26 out of 52 Sabbaths.

We have already purchased facilities in a few locations, such as Hammond, Louisiana (the church meets in Tickfaw), and Grand Island, Nebraska. There are seven other areas where we are investigating possibilities.

Generally speaking, for present needs, we prefer to

purchase an existing facility rather than build, which would take too long for these high-priority areas.

We have a lot to learn about constructing and owning buildings. We need to go slowly, see what works and what doesn't, and gain experience before trying to implement the goals of this program on a Churchwide scale. We should view this program as a long-term goal that will be accomplished as funds and circumstances permit.

## Lost Ambassador Alumni

Ambassador University has lost some of its alumni! That's right—some of AU's former students have disappeared (from our mailing list, that is). And we need your help to find them.

**How do alumni become lost?** When students attend Ambassador, they are added to the university's computer list. When they leave AU, they provide us with a forwarding address. But former students become "lost" from Ambassador's mailing list when they move, marry, separate or divorce and do not inform the university of their new address.

**But if an alumnus notifies Pasadena of an address change, isn't that information passed on to AU?** Ambassador mailing list records are not tied in to master file records in Pasadena. Therefore, notifying Pasadena of name and address changes does not update AU's mailing records. We are working on a programming link between the master file and the computer at Ambassador, but until that link becomes operational, we are asking all alumni to notify AU directly regarding any address or name changes.

**Who should expect to receive alumni mailings? In other words, how do you define alumni?** Beginning with the first graduating class of Ambassador University in 1951, all two-year and four-year graduates and all students who earned at least 24 credit hours from Ambassador are classified as Ambassador alumni.

**How can you help us find AU's lost alumni?** If you know of any Ambassador alumni who do not receive mailings to alumni (such as President Ward's October semiannual letter, homecoming invitations or other alumni association information), please ask them to contact us at the following address so that we can update our files: Ambassador University, Institutional Advancement, Big Sandy, Texas, 75755. Phone: 1-903-636-2040. Fax: 1-903-636-2365.

## High School Honorees



Richard D. Johnson  
First in class  
Lexington High School  
Mansfield, Ohio, church



Darin Mann  
Co-valedictorian  
Charles Page High School  
Tulsa, Oklahoma, West church



Mark Edward Oakleaf  
Salutatorian  
Mountain View High School  
Tucson, Arizona, church

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