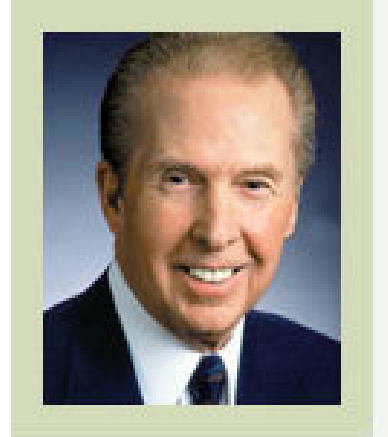


The Goodwins and John Osteen

By Rev. Mel C. Montgomery

The Goodwins' encounter with the late John Osteen changed his life and ministry forever. For those readers unfamiliar with John Osteen, he was the founder of Lakewood Church in Houston which is now pastored by his son, Joel Osteen.



Up until the mid to late 1950's, John Osteen had been a very successful Southern Baptist pastor. Things seemed to be going well for him both personally and in ministry. Then his world came crashing down when his daughter was born with a Cerebral Palsy-like condition. The doctors said there was absolutely no hope. Nothing could be done. They advised that the Osteens give up on their daughter and lock her away in an institution.

Up to this point Osteen had never given much thought to the question of whether or not God still healed. I heard Brother Osteen tell the story many times on his TV program. As he faced this crisis, he turned to his ministry brethren and asked, "Does God still heal?" They replied:

Absolutely not! John you have to understand this: You have had great success in ministry, and God gave you this thorn in the flesh in order to keep you humble. God gave your daughter this disease, and nothing can be done about it.

Osteen replied to them,

I can't believe that! I won't believe that! I refuse to believe the God I love and serve would cripple a helpless child in order to teach me something!

John knew that the Assemblies of God denomination believed in healing and claimed that an outpouring of healing power was given to those who received the "baptism in the Holy Spirit." Osteen was a desperate Christian father, a man of faith, looking for the Great Physician's help concerning his daughter's hopeless condition. Sometimes, that's what it takes—a desperate faith that refuses to accept "no" for an answer. He went to the South Texas District office of the Assemblies of God inquiring about this "baptism in the Holy Spirit." A young minister there (Alan "Tex" Groff) took him to the home of the Rev. and Mrs. J.R. Goodwin in Pasadena, Texas.*

Affectionately known by all as Mom and Dad Goodwin, they were well known for having great success in ministering the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, with people receiving quickly and speaking in other tongues. Upon arriving, Pastor Osteen introduced himself and told the story of his daughter. The story goes along this line: Osteen asked, "Will God heal my daughter?"

The Goodwins replied, "Of course God will heal your baby."

They began ministering to him. Dad Goodwin said, "You need the Holy Spirit." Osteen replied, "I already have the Holy Spirit—I'm a born-again Christian." Dad explained that yes, Osteen had the Holy Spirit within him in salvation, but that he didn't have the Holy Spirit upon him in miraculous power. Dad emphasized that Osteen needed the Holy Spirit.

Dad Goodwin continued by showing John the various scriptures dealing with the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. John began to see that receiving the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues was scriptural, and he therefore had faith to receive this outpouring. Mom and Dad laid their hands on Osteen, and he was filled with the Spirit and spoke in other tongues.

Upon receiving the Holy Spirit at the Goodwins' home, John initially had only a few words in other tongues to speak. There wasn't much of a flow to it in the beginning. That night he returned to his hotel room, and when he was alone with God, the fluency came and continued until he went to Glory--nearly 50 years later.**

This set off a firestorm. The elders of Pastor Osteen's denominational church heard of his speaking in tongues, and they brought him up before the church on trial for heresy. At his trial, Osteen gave a lengthy and scriptural defense of this experience, and when they voted on whether to keep or expel him as their pastor, he won the fight by one vote. But the controversy had brought such division to his church that he went ahead and resigned anyway.

Having no church to pastor, and needing to support his family, Brother Osteen began itinerating. His home church did not want the message of the Holy Spirit's baptism and speaking in tongues, but other churches did want to hear it. However, at this time God spoke to Osteen and gave him a direction that made itinerating difficult.

The Lord told Osteen that for every Sunday for a year, he was to sit in J.R. Goodwin's adult Sunday school class, and allow Dad to teach him about the Holy Spirit's power and Gifts. So for the next twelve months, Osteen accepted invitations to hold revivals only when they could be arranged in such a way that he was able to make it back to Pasadena each Sunday morning to sit under Dad Goodwin's teaching.

Isn't it amazing how God does things? Here Osteen was, with a PhD in Theology, sitting under the teaching of a man who had only an eighth grade education. But Dad Goodwin knew the Holy Ghost, and Osteen was hungry for more of God. After a period of time, Osteen went on to other things, eventually pioneering Lakewood Church. Oh, and by the way, Osteen's daughter—the girl who medical science and theologians gave up for hopeless—guess what happened to her. Before long she was healed. Her father has gone on to be with the Lord, but she is still healed, and is helping her brother Joel pastor Lakewood Church.

To God be the Glory.

The Osteens, like Brother and Sister Hagin and so many others, found much to admire, and much that was worthy of emulation, in the lives and ministries of Brother and Sister Goodwin. Now John Osteen and Kenneth Hagin are in Glory with Mom and Dad Goodwin, and each left behind solid, Scriptural, Spirit-filled ministries that have continued their work long past their Homegoings.

Praise be to God who gave us these wonderful ministry gifts.

In preparing this article, I contacted Lakewood Church and asked if Sister Dodie Osteen--John Osteen's widow--would share with me what had been her and John's opinions of the Goodwins. Dodie Osteen wrote:

Dear Mel,

We went to church with the Goodwins when our children were little. We loved it. They were our good friends and tremendous shepherds. They helped us to know how to pastor.

Love,

Dodie
Lakewood Church
Houston, TX.



Footnotes:

* and **--My thanks to Dodie Osteen, who through her executive assistant, graciously provided these details.

John Osteen's ministry and church--Lakewood Church--continue today under the leadership of his son, Pastor Joel Osteen. Joel's website may be accessed by clicking: <http://joelosteen.com>.

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Information about the author, Rev. Mel C. Montgomery follows on the next page.

About the Author

The ministry of author, reformer, and revivalist, Rev. Mel C. Montgomery is the fulfillment of a word of prophecy given by Sister Goodwin.

She and her late husband, the Rev. J.R. Goodwin, attended powerful meetings held by Smith Wigglesworth and other early Pentecostals in the 1930's and 1940's. Then the Goodwins mentored Kenneth Hagin, John Osteen, Jack Coe, Billye Brim, Elizabeth Pruitt-Sloan, Brother Mel, and other emerging leaders. Hagin patterned his prophetic ministry after the spiritual flow he saw in the Goodwins, and so does Brother Mel.



In 1989, Sister Goodwin laid her hands on Mel and asked God to use him in spiritual gifts. She prophesied that Mel would have “an anointed ministry, like *some of the men of old.*” Years after Sister Goodwin’s passing, the prophecy began to be fulfilled as Mel was appointed Copyright Agent for the Goodwin audios, videos, and books, and people around the world began sending Mel other rare recordings by “the men of old.” These can be heard on:

Mel’s website at: www.brothermel.com

Podcast: “**Voices of the Faith Giants**” at:

<http://brothermel.podbean.com/>

Mel’s message changed as he listened to the recordings of the “men of old” like Howard Carter, Stanley Frodsham, F.F. Bosworth, the Goodwins, and others. He discovered that the sermons of the Pentecostal giants bear little resemblance to today’s extreme teachings, gimmicks, and money-manipulating schemes.

Sister Goodwin’s prophecy is being fulfilled as Mel travels everywhere preaching the message of “the men of old” emphasizing the Cross and Pentecost, and calling for a Charismatic and Word of Faith Reformation. Mel appears in media interviews and he is the author of articles and e-books read by hundreds of thousands of people around the world. Mel’s website has received more than 1.6 million hits from people in over 150 countries. Mel’s free monthly e-mail newsletter, “The Voice of Reformation” can be subscribed to at www.brothermel.com/guestbook.aspx.