

JOEL OSTEEN: Smiling Preacher With Hope-Filled Messages

Joel and Victoria Osteen are among the most widely known faces in the charismatic movement.

Nicknamed “the smiling preacher,” Joel’s trademark grin has been seen on mainstream media and across the covers of his myriad *New York Times* best-selling books as he delivers messages of God’s hope and encouragement.

Senior pastor of Houston’s Lakewood Church, the largest Protestant church in the nation, which averages more than 43,000 weekly attendees, Joel Osteen assumed leadership of the church after his father’s death in 1999. His father, John Osteen, had founded the church 40 years before, and grown it into a sizable congregation, with a weekly Lakewood television broadcast that reached audiences across the world.

Upon becoming senior pastor of Lakewood, Joel and wife Victoria took the already bustling church’s reach to a whole new level. The church’s attendance skyrocketed, eventually necessitating relocation to the 16,800-seat Compaq Center, a former sports arena that once played home court to the NBA’s Houston Rockets. While filling the massive sanctuary multiple times each Sunday morning, his Sunday sermons are broadcast to millions in more than 100 countries across the globe.

His wife Victoria, who serves as the church’s co-pastor, is also a key part of their ministry, leading the Lakewood Women’s Ministry and speaking at Sunday services, as well as being a *New York Times* best-selling author in her own right.

For the hope-filled inspirational messages the Osteens have dedicated much of their lives to, few do it better. With a beaming smile that is instantly recognizable across the globe, and faith-based encouraging words that have touched millions,

Joel and Victoria Osteen have not only helped take the charismatic message mainstream, but have also made an indelible mark on church-goers and seekers alike worldwide.—*Jeremy Burns*