

## Mistaken Identity

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I received an amusing letter last week from Minot State University (North Dakota). It began, “Dear alumni of MSU ...”. Hmm. My memory is not what it used to be, but for the life of me I don’t remember ever crossing the border of North Dakota much less graduating from its state university.

The letter lopped off a year and a half of my life, dating my birth on 5/6/60. It also conferred upon me a degree in Physical Education in 1986. I distinctly remember graduating from the University of South Florida in 1979 with a degree in Criminal Justice.

The letter did admit, “With alumni moving around the country, making career advancements, and getting married, it is difficult to keep our files up-to-date.” *No kidding.* They’ve even *added* a few alumni who didn’t attend Minot State.

Obviously, this was a case of mistaken identity. We humans lose track of each other – where our ancestors came from; old friends who move away; brethren who abandon the Lord and return to the world. Some observations:

**1) God never loses track of those loyal to Him.** Nahum speaks of the wrath of God upon His enemies: “*God is jealous, and the LORD avenges and is furious. The LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserves wrath for His enemies ...*” (Nah 1:1-6). However, the prophet goes on to say, “*The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knows those who trust in Him*” (1:7). Paul says, “*the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: ‘The Lord knows those who are His ...’*” (2 Tim 2:19). We are but an infinitesimal speck upon a planet which orbits a nondescript star in a galaxy of billions of other stars amid an endless universe of billions of galaxies. *Yet God knows us!* He tracks our every step, follows every career change, knows our every thought. God mails out no data-update forms.

**2) Those loyal to God need to keep in touch with His people.** The real Jim Jonas who graduated from MSU has people who are looking for him, but he has not made his whereabouts known. Some erect barriers between themselves and others and then get their feelings hurt when people don’t seem to notice them. While each should “*look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others*” (Ph 2:4), this is a two-way street. We must work to cultivate relationships of mutual concern. Those whose involvement with the local church is marginal shouldn’t be surprised when others fail to flock to them in their time of need. They may not know of it or may be responding to cues of disinterest.