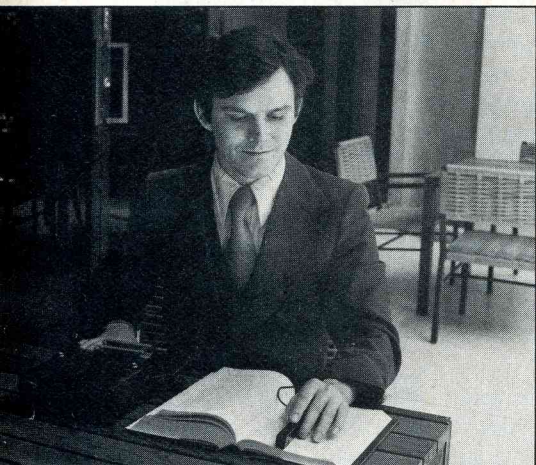


Courage can be measured by sizing up the obstacles a man is prepared to face in order to achieve a worthwhile goal. Courage can also be measured in terms of a man's willingness to pioneer a new path to reach a valued destination.

May 14 of this year, Garth Wardrop Jr., 26, graduated from Ambassador College with high distinction. What's so courageous about that? Simply that Garth is the first blind person to receive a degree from Ambassador. In a sense, he is a pioneer.

In 1971 Garth graduated from the Michigan School for the Blind, his home for 14 years from the age of 4.

From there he went to Wayne State University in downtown De-



troit, Mich. WSU was a commuter college, and, as a result, Garth didn't make one close friend. He said he felt pulled down by the loneliness, so transferred to a computer school in Pittsburgh, Pa.

After graduation in 1975 with a business degree, Garth returned to Michigan, where he tried to obtain special equipment that would enable him to become a computer programmer. Bored by frustrating delays, Garth, assisted by his sister Paddy, began to study the Bible. He had been reading the Bible periodically for about six years, but now began to study it doctrine by doctrine.

At that time Garth did not accept the Bible as having any authority or of actually being the Word of God, but proved some of its principles by studying outside sources. He visited several churches, "comparing the church with the Bible."

Close-Up

Personality profiles of members and co-workers of God's Church around the world.

A few years previously, Garth had suggested to a blind friend, Tim Valender, that he listen to the *World Tomorrow* radio program, which was "all over the dial in the early '70s."

The *World Tomorrow* led Tim into the Church. In the interim Garth and Tim lost contact. However, they eventually got back together and became roommates. Tim was now able to return the favor. He helped Garth study into the question of the Sabbath and ended up taking Garth to a Sabbath service.

In early 1977 Garth, with Tim, began to attend services in Flint, Mich. In May of that year, Mrs. Joe Horchak Sr., a member there, suggested to Garth that he apply to Ambassador. The idea had never occurred to him, but he rose to the challenge, applied and was accepted.

At Ambassador Garth said he felt a sense of belonging not experienced at any of the other institutions. He was involved in the Ambassador speaking clubs and represented his club this year in the annual student speech banquet, a competition among the best speakers on campus.

Garth said he came to Ambassador College with the goal firmly in mind of getting a theology degree, and he refuses to let blindness stand in the way of studying the Bible. "God has in some way been at issue in everything I've been involved in since... I first met people in the Church. When our Father's business is at issue in everything we are doing, any inability to pick up a Bible and read it can be compensated for."

Garth is aided by exceptional recall ("Remembering is easy when something interests you"), which enables him to store much information. "I don't have many scriptures memorized word for word," he says, "but I meditate on God's law each day and night."

Garth pictures his blindness as being analogous to a runner who trains in a lead jacket. "When Christ returns, the lead jacket will be removed. But in the training, the athlete has to run stride for stride with those who don't wear as much lead in their jackets."

Reflecting on his two years at Ambassador, Garth says: The unique aspect of Ambassador is... one is treated as an individual. The system at Ambassador is far more personal."

Garth continues: "And the fact we are here for a cause makes all the difference. The college has indeed faced many difficulties in the last few years, but I have been able to 'ride the rapids' by holding onto the belief that it is necessary for me to graduate, because maybe I can eventually be of some use to the cause for which Ambassador stands."

Until then, Garth says, "I just try to plug along at a resolute pace. 'Resolute' is my favorite word." — *By Malcolm Tofts and James Capo* □



Photos by Roland Rees

ELECTRONIC READING AIDS, left, ease the burden of voluminous reading assignments required of Garth Wardrop. ABOVE: Deputy Chancellor Raymond McNair presents Garth his diploma; a fitting reward after a long struggle.