

Pastor's Desk: 1989 – 1993

Church Attendance

"Canadians lose touch with their churches, but still want a link", said a recent article in *The Ottawa Citizen*. The author observed that though two-thirds of Canadians who belong to a church don't attend regularly, every bride, believer or not, wants her wedding in a church. Of course the church should christen their babies and bury the dead. And the author comments, "It wasn't always like this. The passing of the church from major player in peoples' lives to minor moral concern has happened in the baby boomer's lifetime." This is true. Not so many years ago, our communities were church going. Nearly all churches held at least two services, morning and evening and had thriving Sunday Schools. Al Lanoue noted in his brief history of Winchester and district that the church was a greater factor in molding the lives of young and old than it is today. Church attendance in our own area is no longer what it used to be. This was different in the horse and buggy days. Says Lanoue, "Church attendance was the normal way of life. The entire family went Sunday morning, and the older folks went back for the evening service even if it meant an eight-mile drive. And there was the Wednesday night prayer meeting too. All the services were well attended."

The church is not a social institution. She is the bride of Christ. Christ gave His life for her (Eph.5:22ff). Paul says "that the church is God's household, the pillar and foundation of the truth" (2Tim.3:15). The Church has its source of life in the Word of the Lord. She meets in obedience to that Word. She listens with ceaseless gratitude. She responds in worship. And she goes out into the world as people who have been shaped and sent by the Word. The exhortation of the writer of Hebrews is still up-to-date, "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-and all the more as you see the Day approaching"(Heb.10:25).

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