

Attendance declines with 'liberal' attitudes

There are two main characteristics about formal organized religion in Canada. First, the vast majority of Canadians believe in God (and in percentage terms, most espouse the traditional Christian God). Second, the vast majority of Canadians rarely attend Church.

Why? What's the disconnect between faith and church attendance?

Part of the answer can be seen in this week's historic General Synod in Winnipeg where more than 400 bishops, clergy and ordinary members of the Anglican Church of Canada, this country's oldest Protestant Church, are holding their first such meeting in three years.

There are two main issues: electing a new Canadian leader; and voting on whether or not to let Anglican priests bless same-sex partnerships. And there, dear hearts, is the rub.

The fact is, the more "liberal" a

Church becomes, the more Church attendance declines. And in Canada, as elsewhere, Churches have been taken over by the liberals and - with the exception of the Roman Catholics and evangelical churches, which continue to espouse more conservative theologies (and enjoy attendance growth) - attendance has plummeted.

Which is why the future of the Anglican Church of Canada hangs in the balance this week.

Two years ago, the Anglican Church's House of Bishops released a troubling report showing that between 1961 and 2001, Anglican adherents plunged 53 percent, from 1.36 million Canadians to 642,000, a loss of 13,000 members each year.

The Anglicans were not alone. The United Church of Canada - far and away the most liberal Christian denomination, and once Canada's largest Protestant Church - suffered a loss of 39 percent of its members, dropping from 1.04 million to 638,000. What's more, membership losses don't tell the whole story, since even among those who maintain Church membership, most don't attend Church regularly.

That same study found that Presbyterian Church membership - the Church I grew up in - dropped 35 percent, with Baptists down seven percent and Lutherans, four.

And so it goes.

There is a reason why people attend Church, and that is to attest to their faith, to pray, and to learn more about what they believe to be God's message. But when that message becomes denuded, when ministers and priests decide that catering to current political movements trumps traditional truths, then people simply vote with their feet. I did. And given the numbers, I'm obviously not alone.

Whatever your particular views about the propriety of homosexuality and/or same sex marriage, for example, the Bible is quite clear on it, just as it is about a host of other human behaviors deemed to be immoral.

It has always been a tell-tale sign for this observer that those who oppose the formal celebration of this lifestyle by the Church routinely cite Biblical passages to buttress their case, while those who favor acceptance of the gay lifestyle routinely ignore Biblical strictures and favor political arguments to support their case.

There are, of course, other reasons why Church attendance has declined, i.e. the dramatic drop in birthrates among the traditional constituencies of the so-called mainstream Churches, but even here, much of that drop can be attributed to the easy availability and subsequent popularity of abortion, another issue which has resulted in many more traditional believers walking away from their respective Churches.

At the time of this writing, of course, the Anglicans have just arrived in Winnipeg and have not voted on the same-sex issue.

But that issue has already split the world-wide 77-million-member Anglican Church, as the Western Churches tend to adopt a more "liberal," i.e. non-Biblical, approach, while the growing areas of the Church, Africa and Latin America, adhere to the traditional moral views of the Church.

Whichever way the vote goes - and, this being Canada, it is most likely to go in favor of formal same-sex recognition - the Anglican pews, already dramatically empty in most places, will become even less populated by parishioners.

In the U.S., where Church attendance is dramatically higher than in Canada, the worldwide Anglican Church has already given the U.S. Anglicans an ultimatum to either drop their support for gay clergy and same-sex unions by September or face expulsion from the communion.

Heading into Winnipeg, a group of retired liberal Canadian bishops pleaded with the delegates to approve same-sex blessings and then get on with more "critical" matters, "such as poverty and global warming."

Which pretty well says it all. To the liberals, politics, i.e. global warming, is "critical," while traditional morality is a minor annoyance to be disposed of by all those thoughtful people who have, let it be said, overseen the dramatic decline of a Church to the point that the aforementioned 2005 internal Anglican study predicted that Church "is facing extinction by the middle of this century."

Pity.



**National
Affairs**

**Claire
Hoy**

Caring a whole awful lot

"UNLESS someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better, it's not."

Dr. Seuss

Boy did Theodor Geisel have a way of putting things - simply and eloquently.

His words ring as true today as when he first penned them.

One of his most famous stories - *The Lorax* - warns us all about apathy, greed and our precious environment. For those unfamiliar with the tale, it basically describes the greedy man-like *Once-ler* who chopped down all the *Truffula Trees* in order to make his *Thneed*, an odd-looking garment that "everyone needs." The Lorax tried, but couldn't stop the destruction. This tale was a lesson to future generations to heed.

Along with progress came smog and water pollution, forcing all the critters to relocate.

"Business is business! And business must grow ... regardless of crummies in tummies, you know ...

"And at that very moment, we heard a loud whack!

"From outside in the fields came a sickening smack of an axe on a tree. Then we heard the tree fall.

"The very last *Truffula Tree* of them all!"

Every parent should read this story to their children. The message is clear - it's as blatant as the tuft on any given *Truffula Tree*.

While we're not really worrying about *Truffula Trees*, this generation (and all who follow) do need to pay attention to the signs. We are all keenly aware of the global warming alarm bells; waste disposal issues; urbanization and our feeble attempts to slow the deterioration of our planet by following the 3Rs; leaving a less disturbing ecological footprint; seeking forms of "green" energy, etc.

While we may be on the right track, we should have

Students donated

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The other students involved were Elizabeth Ritlap, Erica Giancula, Gabrielle Micieli, Milena Difeo and Christina Lopiccirella.

This was a very heart-warming gesture and the Caledon Animal Shelter staff are very impressed, and very grateful for your donation. Thank you to each of you for your kindness.

What a great idea! Donations are always welcome and truly appreciated.

Margie Mols

Volunteer

Caledon Animal Shelter



Mark Pavilons

started a decade or two ago on this road to self-enlightenment.

I can picture that furry little Lorax sitting on his stump, shaking a fist or two at us right now.

People in this neck of the woods have been enjoying recycling for many years now, and Peel (Caledon) residents are among the biggest supporters of the program. My family alone fills two to three blue boxes per week, and could likely fill four. Our garbage has been noticeably reduced. I only hope my fellow citizens are doing the same, but judging by the numbers of recycling boxes at the end of driveways, that's not always the case each week.

Caledon is home to some very active and passionate conservationists and environmentalists. Fortunately, these are no longer considered fringe groups, but are quickly becoming the norm - the politically correct stance in an ever-changing world.

We're very fortunate to benefit from the efforts of such stewards.

Being one who doesn't care for hypocrisy, I often ask such dedicated environmentalists what type of vehicles they drive. Most of the time, they're average vehicles, but you would be surprised just how many drive fossil-fuel-guzzling SUVs. In my opinion, those who are committed to saving the planet should all be driving those tiny Smart cars, using skateboards or riding their bikes to work. Heck, I'd even go for ricksha services around Bolton during the

summer months, which would provide some physically fit students with some great income opportunities.

But I suppose our society isn't ready for such a "giant leap for mankind." Pity.

If we don't start to look at such things more seriously, it will be too late and we'll all be using our feet a lot more in coming years! And some of us laugh at the Mennonites for their disregard for modern contrivances. They may have a lot of company in years to come if we are bent on following corporate greed instead of community wealth.

Everything we do - everything in life - is about choices, even the choice not to do anything at all.

A few years ago, activists chained themselves to the trunks of old growth trees, which came under modern man's mechanized axe. Not much word of that these days. It seems we're far too concerned about global

warming, melting ice caps, depleting fish stocks and altered growing seasons. At least some of us are concerned - those who care.

The Thneed-makers behind the controls of the mechanized axes, fishing boats and belching stacks are only interested in "biggering" - biggering their operations and biggering their money.

Funny. In the end, money won't be worth a damn when all the trees are just trunks; when the fish have long gone; when dust bowls cover our farmlands and our skies darken.

UNLESS, as Seuss warned ...

The future's not ours, not in the least. It belongs to those who follow, from the north and the east.

Our legacy's odd, but not unfixable yet. We have created one heck of a debt.

So for younglings now and those yet to be born, let's clean up our act, so there's nothing to mourn!

Our Readers Write

BRAG says thanks

Saturday, June 9 the Bolton Residents Assoc. Group (B.R.A.G) hosted our first annual residents' picnic. We are thankful for the attendance of all our residents for their participation, it was a great success. We also like to take the time to express our thanks to our gold sponsor Solmar Developments; silver sponsor Woody's Building Products, and our bronze sponsor The Town of Caledon. Special thanks to Garden Foods, M & M Meats and Gayla Canada. I would also like to thank the various groups that without their involvement it would have been impossible to achieve the success of our picnic - Miss Jenny's Band, Caledon Enterprise/George Moffatt, Can Tai Karate, Meals on Wheels, Hospice, Caledon seniors Rotary Place group, MADD, Northern Tatts, Region of Peel, St. John Ambulance Therapy Dogs, Naked Vine, Italian Bocci Club, Wendy Williams Re/Max West, Wildfield Residents Group, Navy League of Canada/Sea Cadets. Thank you councillors Annette Groves (BBQ Queen), Jason Payne (BBQ King) and Richard Whithead.

With the greatest appreciation, it was a wonderful day with great people.

Rose D'Arpino
BRAG Chair

Send us your letters

The *Citizen* welcomes letters to the editor. Feel free to mail them, drop them off at our Bolton office (25 Queen St. North) or e-mail them to editor@caledoncitizen.com. Please include your name and phone number in case we need to contact you.

WANTED! 7 Homes That Need Roofing

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