

Religion alive, well and living in Prince George

by THEANO KOMAS
Citizen Staff Reporter

Prince George churches are bucking a nation-wide trend as they report an increase in attendance.

According to Dr. Reginald Bibby, an assistant professor at the University of Lethbridge, a survey of 2,000 Canadians showed the country's major Protestant denominations are leading the decline in regular church attendance that has taken place in the last generation.

"These findings are not true of Prince George," says Rev. F. A. Schole, minister of Connaught Hill Lutheran Church. "It seems the press is inclined to leave the impression that church going is no longer fashionable."

He and nine other Prince George ministers contacted by the Citizen says attendance at churches here is increasing.

Dr. Bibby's survey showed half of Canada's population is under 27 and only one in five is a churchgoer.

One third of the middle-aged population attend church and of those half are over 60.

Of Canadians attending church on a weekly basis, 51 per cent are Catholic, 28 per cent Protestant, and 13 per cent Jews.

Bibby said that a generation ago, 65 per cent of the members of the Protestant churches went to church once a week. Today, regular attendance is 26 per cent.

By comparison, the Roman Catholic fall has been from 78 to 46 per cent.

Bibby points out that in the last generation Canadian women have opted out of regular church attendance in greater proportions, with the percentage of women attending dropping 43 per cent from 71 to 34, while the decrease among the country's men has been 33 per cent, from 64 to 31.



"It would appear that church attendance has equalized as part of the equalization of sex roles," says Bibby.

However, Prince George ministers say their congregations are increasing, not decreasing.

While they admit any increases in church attendance across Canada are not directly proportional to population increases, local churchmen agree there is definitely not a decrease in Prince George.

Rev. B. B. Ruggles of the Evangelical Free Church of Prince George says he doesn't know how local increases in church attendance compare to population increases in Prince George, but says "it's not a matter of people moving around."

"The increase in our particular church is largely due to our efforts to avert people to Christ," Rev. Schole, who recently attended a convention of western

districts reports "a three-per-cent increase in attendance of the Lutheran church in B.C. and Alberta in the last year."

Although he acknowledges a possible decline in Sunday school attendance across the country, he also notes a general decline in birth rates.

Rev. A. J. Hosking of St. Michael's and All Angels Anglican Church identifies the definite increase in his congregation with families making stronger commitments in their religious beliefs and attending church on a more regular basis.

Dr. Bibby said there were some exceptions to the drop in Protestant attendance, naming Evangelical, Pentecostal, Nazarene and Christian Missionary Alliance churches as among those whose members are bucking the trend.

"The Pentecostal Church is the fastest-growing denomination in Canada," says Rev. L. H. Schrader, minister of the Hart highway Pentecostal church, "and it's because we are

out to win others to Christ on a personal one-to-one basis."

Rev. Ruggles says that "although these surveys may indeed be valid across Canada as a whole, they do not apply to his own congregation."

"Perhaps the Protestant faith across the country has degenerated to simply a form of religion rather than a personal relationship with Jesus and his followers, as we have created in our parish."

Several of the local ministers noticed a significant rise in the number of youths and younger families attending church, but perhaps this is a reflection of Prince George itself.

Rev. Hans Kowenberg of St. Giles Presbyterian Church explains.

"Prince George is a new community, with a young population building its foundation."

"People here often refer to Prince George as the 'island in the north' because they tend to feel somewhat isolated in relation to the Lower Mainland," says Rev. Kowenberg.

"I have never found a community as joiner-oriented as Prince George, not only in reference to spiritual acceptance but also to the number of groups and clubs existing throughout the city."

"The reason for this is loneliness, perhaps not overt loneliness, but people are seeking community identity. They realize there's more to be found and shared in a group."

Rev. Kowenberg says that "in relation to religious acceptance in Prince George, young families starting out need the security religion can give them and their children."

"Bibby reports a large percentage of churchgoers are over 60 yet the average age in my congregation is between 30 and 35," says Rev. Kowenberg.

13,000 VOTES AHEAD OF SOCRED

Barrett breezes to byelection victory

Chlorine dangers dismissed

by TOM NIXON
Citizen Staff Reporter

Shipment of highly-dangerous chlorine in tank trucks through residential areas of the city is not dangerous to residents, pulp mill and pollution control board officials said today.

Dick Nickel, regional pollution control board manager, said he checked a temporary unloading facility for the deadly chemical Thursday at Miworth and is satisfied with the precautions taken by the city's three pulp mill companies to prevent any accidental release of chlorine gas.

Prince George and Pulp and Paper Co., Ltd., officials said the off-loading and shipment by truck of the chlorine is done under the regulations of the federal transport commission, the provincial boiler inspectors' office and a private regulatory association called the Chlorine Institute.

The off-loading facility is a temporary measure to give the Northwood Pulp and Timber Co., Ltd., Intercontinental Pulp Co., and Prince George pulp mills a source of bleaching chlorine usually shipped to the mills on the British Columbia Railway.

The BCR has been shut down for two weeks by labor problems.

PGPP spokesman Bob Affleck said the PG Pulp mill and Intercontinental Pulp mill require 85 tons of chlorine each day for full production.

Even if the current truck transfer from Canadian National Railways trackage at Miworth is sufficient to supply the bleaching agent, however, the company is uncertain of how long it can continue adding to its huge inventory.

Chlorine shipments by truck, alarming to local residents, are common in the prairie provinces and in the United States, pollution control official Nickel said. He said to his knowledge only one accident has ever taken place which endangered a community.

Nickel said he was impressed by the precautions taken by the pulp companies in the Miworth chemical transfer.

Between five and ten trucks daily of the chemical are shipped from the Miworth siding down Otway Road to Tabor Boulevard, down Fifth Avenue to The Bypass and out Highway 97 to the mills.



Co-operation is necessary when mothers of twins go for a stroll as Shirley Powers, Arlene Langevin, Sally Szanik and Nancy Gelin found out recently.

New club deals with double trouble

by BEV CHRISTENSEN
Citizen family editor

No Prince George woman is likely to duplicate the record of the Russian woman who had a family of 87 children.

She achieved that record by producing four sets of quadruplets, seven sets of triplets, 16 pairs of twins and 18 single births. History doesn't record any advice that she could have offered to other women who give birth to more than one child at a time, but these mothers may now join the Mothers of Twins Club,

which is designed for just that purpose.

Although they've had only three meetings, the local club already has a membership of 15. Meetings are held at each other's homes and are designed to encourage the members to share ideas about handling and feeding two or more babies.

Although most of the members' babies are infants, they hope to expand the number of mothers of older twins who come to the meetings so they can share their experiences with the problems that develop as the children grow up.

For example, many mothers of twins may notice that their children develop their own language at about the time other children would begin learning to talk. The result is the twins jabber away quite contentedly at each other and their natural speech development may be delayed.

Another problem experienced by all mothers of twins is finding someone willing to babysit with two infants. Members of the new club hope to set up a babysitting co-op to take care of this problem.

Members also hope to set up an equipment exchange or sale so mothers who've just had twins will be able to obtain equipment and clothing more cheaply.

There are branches of the Mothers of Twins Clubs throughout Canada and the U.S. and one of their purposes is to take part in research being done into diabetes in twins, personality development in twins, hyperactivity and a variety of other conditions.

(For more information about the club, phone 964-4717 or 563-3920).

VANCOUVER (CP) — To the surprise of almost no one, Dave Barrett, British Columbia's former New Democratic Party premier, made an impressive political comeback Thursday with a convincing Vancouver East byelection victory.

With all 179 polls counted, Mr. Barrett was almost 13,000 votes ahead of his nearest rival, Social Credit candidate Ralph Long, in what has for the past 40 years been a strong CCFNDP riding.

Mr. Barrett's formidable victory came after an 18-vote loss in the Dec. 11 general election to car dealer George Kerster, a political unknown running for Social Credit in Coquitlam.

Following the defeat, which was paralleled by the defeat of the NDP government, former resources minister Bob Williams resigned his seat to make way for Mr. Barrett's return to the legislature. Mr. Williams had a 5,000-vote plurality Dec. 11.

Standing in the house now is Social Credit, 35; NDP, 18; Liberals, one; Progressive Conservatives, one.

A jubilant Mr. Barrett said in his victory speech that "tonight we celebrate, tomorrow we go back to work."

He said the voters sent a message of dissatisfaction to Victoria and his win shows that "reason, logic, love and understanding is a better way of democracy and you've proved it tonight."

He concluded that "there are great fights yet to be won for the ordinary people of this province and to that purpose I dedicate myself."

A disillusioned Mr. Long said after his defeat that "I

The concession was made Thursday by Robert Andras, minister of immigration.

Ricardo Leiva, 35, his wife and two children have been ordered deported from Canada. Leiva came here from Chile two years ago and has been fighting the deportation order since his application for refugee status was rejected one year ago.

The Leivas were to have left Canada by May 7 this year or face deportation to Chile. However, Andras intervened and delayed the deportation order pending the outcome of an investigation by his department.

Ted Drage, local immigration spokesman, said the Leivas currently plan to leave Canada for Spain on July 8 but the move may occur in June.

"The minister has gone along with our suggestion and allowed the children to finish their school year here," Drage said. "The Leivas may leave earlier but this is their choice."

"There is no guarantee they will be readmitted to Canada," he said.

The Leivas have moved from their Prince George apartment and are staying with friends here and were Frank Oberle, Prince George-Peace River MP, told The Citizen the Leivas will not receive any special consideration from immigration officials when they apply for Canadian landed immigrant status in Spain.



BARRETT

never really wanted to get into politics in the first place."

He conceded that if he had been more realistic he would have seen that the byelection would be a very one-sided contest.

Final results were Mr. Barrett, 19,957; Mr. Long 7,016; Liberal Jim Siemens 1,039; Progressive Conservative Les Lavers, 214, independent Anne Boylan 59; North American Labor Party candidate Alan Levinson, 40.

200-mile limit set

OTTAWA (CP) — Canada will declare a 200-mile offshore fisheries jurisdiction later this year to take effect by next Jan. 1, External Affairs Minister Allan MacEachen said today.

Canada has already passed legislation that would make a 200-mile limit the law 60 days after it is proclaimed.

OUR MAN AT HABITAT

Contrasts are everywhere

Citizen reporter ELI SOPOW is in Vancouver for the United Nations' Habitat Conference on Human Settlements.

VANCOUVER — The first images to hit you at the doorway of Habitat Centre are a

security guard, an accreditation desk and a bar.

Thursday morning the elevators in the seven-storey building were jammed and the stairway was blocked by workers unloading cases of beer.

On the wall close to the beer-filled hallway and jammed

elevators were publicity photos with the caption:

"Habitat — a major conference devoted to the problems of rapid, unplanned urban growth. Chief among the objectives of the conference will be to demonstrate that solutions to these problems do exist..."

The blatant opulence of the United Nations conference stands in stark contrast to problems of food, energy and population being discussed here.

A list of restaurants recommended to delegates is topped

See CONTRASTS, page 2

The vote's the thing

RICHMOND, B.C. (CP) — Environment Minister Jean Marchand said Wednesday the federal government would risk defeat if it sought a radical redistribution of wealth to developing nations.

"How much can we deprive Canadians of their so-called standard of living without being defeated in the next election?"

More Habitat, pages 9, 11

TODAY

CARNage

in the Prince George area

Killed this week: 1
Killed this year: 7
To same date 1975: 10

Injured this week: 4
Injured this year: 153
To same date 1975: 229

FEATURED INSIDE

- BCR unions have been awarded large pay increases, but the railway is still shutdown. Page 3.
- Old antlers provide the basis for Robson valley artwork. One of a series. Page 11.
- Rain throughout the week has made the weekend sports scene in Prince George much busier than originally scheduled. Page 13.
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WEATHER

A gradual drying trend developing from the west is expected to bring warmer temperatures and clearer skies today and Saturday.

Today it will be mainly cloudy with sunny periods and a few afternoon showers. Overnight low was 2.

Low today, 3, with a high of 15 expected.

On June 4, 1975 the high was 12; the low, 5.

Temperatures page 2



NOW HEAR THIS

- Eleven-year-old Tony Siefert of 2085 Queensway lost his wallet in the vicinity of 17th and Larch Street Thursday while making his newspaper collections. The wallet, with the words Norm's Delivery printed on it, contained \$150 in collection money. Anyone knowing its whereabouts is asked to phone 563-9676.
- Alexander Graham Bell's invention has proved a boon to hungry people. A man entered the Chuckwagon Cafeteria at the Sprucecland plaza and was confronted with a lineup at the food counter. He went outside to a payphone, phoned the cafeteria, placed his order, walked into the cafeteria and collected it, leaving a number of people in line staring.