

Mainline Churches in Trouble

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The North American Church is in crisis – especially mainline traditions! The simple pastoral model appeared sufficient through the 1950's and 1960's when most people attended the Church. However, in more recent decades, mainline churches that depended on biological growth began to decline sharply. Biological growth centers on the membership remaining stable or increasing in number as they give birth and their children continue in the life of the Church. Current members can get a reality check by asking the question – “How many of my children and/or grandchildren are active in the life of the Church?”... precious few! This dynamic, combined by the growing secularism in our culture, has resulted in a profound loss of members. There was a 40% decline in membership in the Anglican Church of Canada between 1960 and 2000. There was a further 40% decline between 2000 and 2010! We are in free-fall!



The largest Methodist, Presbyterian, and Pentecostal Churches in the world are in Seoul, South Korea. Mainline, Evangelical and Charismatic Churches have grown. They have experienced growth through a simple aphorism, “Pray & Obey.” The amazing prayer movement in this country stems from Anglican Missionary Father Archer Torrey, grandson of famous 19th C. Evangelical scholar R.A. Torrey and founder of the Jesus Abbey! The basis for this tremendous growth is listening prayer where Jesus directs His Church.



Where is the Church working in North America? One Canadian faith community that has experienced profound growth is Southland Church, Steinbach, Manitoba (<http://mysouthland.com>). This Church (Evangelical Free background) has grown from about 100 to 4,000 in a rural town of 13,500 in SE Manitoba. There has been significant interest in this church that has centered its life in prayer. The Lord has led them to stunning growth. Jesus said, “I will build my Church...” (Matthew 16:18) He knows how to build His Church. The Southland Leadership is simply listening and obeying the Living God!

Southland Church has a vision to see the Canadian Church renewed. See: Church Renewal (<http://churchrenewal.com>) They sponsor conferences in January, May, and October each year. Southland has spent \$300,000 to offer follow-up for clergy with practical mentoring, helping senior pastors establish a foundation of prayer and growth in their churches – all for free! If you have the time and can get to Winnipeg, MB (on Air Miles?), folks from Steinbach will pick you up and house & feed you through the weekend event at no charge... then they'll get you back to the Winnipeg Airport!! The registration cost is \$139 (CAN). This is doable for our NS/PEI Parish clergy and lay leaders. I attended last October. It was AWESOME!!



BEWARE: This will change your prayer life and lead to significant personal spiritual growth AND enlargement of your parish numerically!

Throughout Church History the key to growth is leadership development. The same is true in all dimensions of society – business, media, etc. Southland is bending over backwards to make the principles of spiritual renewal available to the Canadian Church. All one needs to do is show up!