

DOES THE SURVEY INCLUDE ME?

by Carl McMurray

"A 1999 Gallup poll revealed that only 10 percent of American church members are active in any personal ministry and that 50 percent have no interest in serving in such a capacity. Churches that are growing and vital have succeeded in turning an audience into an army; spectators into participants." Gallup Organization – via Christian Chronicle

Many religious leaders seem to be baffled by the steady decline in the attendance of many churches. Does the quote above shed any light on the matter? Over the last five decades churches have gotten increasingly more involved with the social gospel. There have been more dinners and less "doing." More Sunday morning spectators and fewer Bible study students. There has been an increase in sermonettes from preacherettes and a decrease in scriptural declaration. Many churches run high on comedy and low on commitment. Physical building programs are built around eating areas and gymnasiums and scriptural building programs are non-existent. "Service" for the average American church-goer is something they seek to get, not give. Is it really any wonder that 50% have no interest in being active in any type of personal ministry?

In spite of the fact that many have been taught that the church is a glorified social club where you pay your dues and attend once a week – they are still not satisfied. Something's missing. Attendance is falling because people 1) are losing hope and just giving up, or 2) they are looking elsewhere. Is it possible that the apostle was right when he declared the kingdom to be more than eating and drinking? Some seem to think so. Which brings us to another part of the same survey above.

"Fifty-eight percent of those who go to church regularly first began going when they were invited by someone they knew. Conversely, 63 percent of those who do not attend report that no friend had ever invited them." Gallup Organization – via Christian Chronicle

I can do as much as Andrew did when he invited Peter to "come see." Who knows if I might also find a "Peter" among the people I associate with. I can pray about it and think about it and make it my personal service to my Lord to invite folks to "come see" if the New Testament church is really what they might be looking for.

