

What Are People Looking For In A Church?

by Bill Crews

At this very moment thousands of our fellow-Americans are looking for a church (or, as some express it, "a church home"). They are looking (1) because they have recently moved to a new area, (2) because they had drifted and are now ready for a renewal of religious interest in their lives, or (3) because they have become unhappy with "their old church." What are they looking for? What do they hope to find? What do they feel they need?

What Some Are Looking For

1. Some are looking for a church that is like the former church they were affiliated with, most for no other reason than tradition or custom. They don't want any change from the religion they have become accustomed to and are comfortable with.
2. Some are looking for a church (actually a church building) that is convenient to where they live, one that is within easy driving distance. They don't want to have to drive very far to get to "the services."
3. Some are looking for a church made up of friendly people who will make them feel welcome and wanted. They don't want one whose members seem cold and formal.
4. Some are looking for a church that will give them a sense of belonging and of importance. They don't want a church whose members just never seem to accept them.
5. Some are looking for a big church because they prefer to just blend in with the crowd. They don't want a church that is so small that they can be missed at services or that they have to take some active role in the assemblies.
6. Some are looking for a small church because they want to be able to know all the members and "smaller churches are usually friendlier and more like a family." They don't want a church that is so big that "you can't tell the members from the visitors."
7. Some are looking for a church that is engaged in doing a lot of "good works." They don't want a church that isn't into solving "world problems" and committed to "social reform" and "community improvement."
8. Some are looking for a church that will give them "contacts" and "connections" that will help them in the business world.
9. Some are looking for a church that sponsors a lot of youth activities and family affairs. They aren't interested in a church that doesn't have parties, picnics, dinners, suppers, games, teams, clubs, exercise and health programs, classes for hobbies and crafts, etc.
10. Some are looking for a church that is "progressive," that "keeps up with a changing world," and that offers "contemporary music" and "contemporary activities" and "contemporary worship."

What Is Missing

Now, if you will, look back over that list. There is in it not a word about God, or Christ, or the Bible, or the gospel of Christ, or salvation from sin, or soul, or godly living, or heaven, or eternal life. This is not to say that none of the above points is important, but some of them are wrong, and all of them leave the most important things in this life out of the picture. People need to open their Bibles, and read the New Testament, and find out why Jesus built His church, and find out what a congregation of God's people is supposed to be, and to teach, and to do. Churches existed in the New Testament for the purpose of ministering to the spiritual needs of men, for the purpose of ministering to the spiritual needs of men, for the purpose of glorifying God, for the purpose of teaching God's word, for the purpose of saving the lost and edifying the saved. When a group of Christians constitute a church, they do not have to

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