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IN THE MAIL BAG

Georgetown, April 20, 1948

Georgetown Herald,
Dear Editor:

After reading in your editorial columns in recent issues of the paper regarding church-going—I was tempted to send you the enclosed article clipped from a New York newspaper, some time ago. I thought it was fairly typical of most of us. I read about three months after this was published the author died suddenly at his desk from a heart attack.

Hope you can find time to read this.

Yours Sincerely,

A WELL WISHER

by O. O. McIntyre

We set off on one of those aimless Sunday evening strolls without objective. The city generally was hurrying to the movies and cafes. And that is why a shadowy brick church on the fringe of things, its bell tolling so sadly, appeared a sudden symbol of neglect.

Only an occasional straggler mounted the steps and vanished into the dim-lit quiet. Soft notes from the organ came trembling down the nave in a sort of gentle ballyhoo. And on the impulse of the moment, we too, climbed the steps, the first church-going in months.

Like many reluctants I am continually assailed, once inside a religious edifice, for my neglect in attendance. It requires only an hour out of the week and there is no other place where one may so satisfyingly relax into surprising and almost unbelievable calm.

Frequently many pay \$6.00 per seat to be bored at plays that offend taste and yet waver between a 50-cent piece and a dollar bill at the church offertory. I had a far more comfortable seat than at most theatres and was not annoyed by attitude-striking pests.

There was a serene earnestness about the pastor, a Bert Lytell-looking gentleman slightly gray and in his 40's. I should say that was convincing he believed what he preached. His text was, as I remember, from Isaiah: "Thou wilt keep in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, etc." An old and familiar theme, of course. Stripped of verbiage, just another version of the aged simplicity: Trust in the Lord. Yet it had a consoling warmth that sparked an inner glow.

I was interested in the scattering congregation. Probably 100 in a church that might easily seat 500. About six young folk in their teens. Probably 25 middle-aged, and the remainder oldish, in their 60's. All well but quietly dressed. The complacency was marked in contrast to the usual metropolitan crowd. No fidgeting, coughing or glancing about.

Not since my courting days had I joined in a hymn. I glanced about and there did not seem to be a person not trying to lift voice in song. My grandmother used to sing hymns when she felt happier. "They roll the gloom away," she declared. Indeed, every face did seem brighter, the atmosphere rain-washed.

The sermon over, the preacher was at the door to meet members of his slim congregation. He saw my wife and I were strangers, inquired if we lived in the city, and introduced us to a couple near by. We were invited to come often, also to attend a little social event in the basement an evening hence. It was quite folksey and alien to the usual New York manner. Most of his congregation, he said, were regulars. So far as he could observe, we were the only strangers there that evening. His church had full membership of 700, but his congregation, he said a bit sadly, rarely averaged more than 300, and that at the Sunday morning service. He took our address and hoped some day he might be permitted to call.

Meandering northward into the buzz-fuzz of the evening roar, we could not help but reflect on thousands of churches similarly struggling—veritable vortexes in the gathering storms. Each trying valiantly and often pathetically to establish a meed of hope, peace and comfort in a hungering world of vanishing faith. And how little most of us aid in such worthy endeavour, morally, financially or otherwise. There is no place in a vast city where the lonely are so pleasantly and sincerely welcomed as the average church. For this reason alone one would think they would be filled.

This, too. I had had a troubling week. Yet I felt markedly reposed leaving the church. There was a tranquility and a fresh clarity of thought and vision about the week to come. Also I slept like the proverbial log that night. Yet like so many legwards it will probably be some time before I go to church again. Too many are that way about matters of the spirit—at a time when as never before have we needed bolstering of cherished beliefs.

HIGH SCHOOL NEWS

The Cadet Formal, held last Thursday night is over for another year and those who attended had a good time. What happened to everybody else? It was a beautiful night (ah-h-h-h), with Bob Martin's orchestra providing scrumptious music, the Rose Room looked wonderful (with a little help), and there was cats but where, oh where was the crowd? Was Georgetown all sick at once? No excuses please. Well anyhow those who were there enjoyed a couple of specialty numbers by the band consisting of Max and Too Fat Polka. (SHE was there in person). Also the spot dance prizes of chocolates and free pictures of themselves were won by Thoresa Curtis, Clara Burns and Mo Kelly, Roy Laidlaw.

On Friday evening two of Scott's buses provided transportation for the school's "was famous" Glee Club. The sleepy mob (effects of the dance, you know) gently crammed themselves on the buses (radius first) and were carried away to the mighty metropolis of Brampton. At the Peel Musical Festival the Glee Club fought vigorously for music championships and lost. The only first was won by the Boy's Choir with the Girl's Choir securing a second. The Mixed Choir struggled in fourth with the Senior Double Trio and Junior Double Trio coming fifth and fourth respectively. A little more practice would have helped a great deal, but it's too late now.

The trip back home was very interesting with all the sights to be seen inside as well as outside the buses. On the way back one bus had a flat tire and was forced to stay at Mt. Pleasant until the other bus could come back to the rescue. The rain didn't improve the trip any. We noticed that everybody seemed to be having a good time. (wow).

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