

SKYVIEW CHURCH

WHERE CHRISTIANS MEET

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Churches are in decline. This is true of all churches of every denomination. It is also true of the body of Christ, the church of Christ. Congregations are losing more members than they are gaining. Young people especially, are either shopping around for a more contemporary place to worship, or they have just stopped attending services anywhere. According to Pew Research, 25% of people born between 1981 and 1989 claimed no religious affiliation back in 2007. This

than one third now claim no religious affiliation. And we wring our hands and try to figure out what is happening. Is it because churches are boring? Is it because people cannot find what they are looking for? Many people who jump from one congregation to another never find what they are looking for. The truth is they really don't know what they are looking for.

What is the cause of this decline? There are, no doubt, many reasons. A search on Google will tell us the decline is anything from a lack of congregational leadership to a society that is not interested in religion. Blame is often placed where blame does not belong. Just saying "these are the times we are living in" is not a real answer. It cannot be denied that the times we live can contribute to a lack of growth or even a decline in membership in churches. But is it really any outside force that is the problem? Could it be that the fault rests upon the shoulders of church members?

One of the greatest problems facing the church today are members whose Christianity and practice of religion is confined within the four walls of the church building. Any evangelism is done in the church building. All benevolence or out-reach is performed within the confines of four walls. Any good works are done only to those whose names are on a church directory. It seems that we many times lose our focus. We fail to understand that our practice of Christianity must be an everyday, twenty-four hour a day proposition. We should act everyday, among our friends, relatives and neighbors, just like we act when we are "in church."

When we start being a "light on a hill" shining forth to everyone, and when we become the "salt of the earth" to everyone, we will see a big difference. Instead of just shining our lights within the fellowship of other saints and instead of being salt to fellow members, we reach out and shine our lights to the world, and become a savor to the world, we will make a difference in the world.

Churches in the New Testament did not decline--they multiplied, often on a daily basis. This was because they went everywhere preaching the word. They met in synagogues, on the streets, in homes shining the light of the Gospel to those who were lost. They saw not only to their own physical needs, they shared with everyone. Instead of asking "What's wrong with the church?" maybe we should ask, "What's wrong with us as individual Christians?"