**Church Attendance**

**At the time of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, only 7 percent of the people in America's 13 colonies belonged to a church. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Bad times are boom times for evangelical churches. Congregation growth at evangelical churches jumped 50 percent during each recession between 1968 and 2004, according to a new Texas State University study. *(Foreign Policy, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 6, 2009)***

**Minister says to a parishioner who is about to leave church following the church service: "Good to see you again, Mr. Sims. Have a nice six months!" *(The Clergy Journal cartoon)***

**Preacher: “How come I never see you in church anymore, Morris?" Morris: “There are too many hypocrites there, Reverend." Preacher: “Don't worry, Morris; there's always room for one more." *(Rocky Mountain News)***

**Did you know that a recent national survey shows that 80% of all church members were first invited as guests? *(Unity on the Avenue, Denver, Colorado, newsletter, September 10, 1991)***

**Our minister, looking for ways to increase Sunday-morning attendance, offered a prize to the person who invited the most guests. A tally was made pew by pew before the service started. The congregation was quiet as the results were counted. Just then the door opened, and three latecomers slipped into the back pew. The minister looked up. "You folks who just came in -- who invited you?" *(Ann Shroll, in Reader's Digest)***

**One man says to another after the church service: "Church attendance is fabulous this morning! Was there a news bulletin I missed?" *(The Clergy Journal cartoon)***

**A Yale University study of 2812 elderly people found that those who never or rarely attended church had nearly twice the stroke rate of weekly churchgoers. *(Malcolm McConnell, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Another Saturday-night snowstorm had diminished the number of people in attendance at our church on Sunday. The assistant pastor remarked, "This snowstorm may not have separated the sheep from the goats, but it has certainly separated those who have four-wheel drive from those who do not." *(Carol D. Gallagher, in Reader's Digest)***

**Statistics show that a church filled to 80% capacity stops growing. We are and have been at 80% for a long time. "Status quo" must change to "status grow". *(Rev. Gerry Comstock, Unity minister)***

**On the first Sunday after the terrorist attacks, people filled the pews at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Louisville, Ky., seeking solace in a sermon about grief and joining together to sing “America the Beautiful.” That day, the church drew 200 people, significantly more than the average attendance of 150, and for the next two Sundays the crowds kept coming. But by Sunday attendance was back to normal at St. Andrew's, an average-sized American church, as it has been in recent weeks at houses of worship across the country. Americans, who after the attacks turned to religion in an outpouring that some religious leaders hailed as a spiritual “great awakening," have now mostly returned to their former habits. “I just don't see much indication that there has been a great awakening or a profound change in America's religious practices," said Frank Newport, editor in chief of the Gallup Poll. *(Rocky Mountain News, November 26, 2001)***

**The Rev. Billy S. Martin, pastor of a church in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, was asked about his congregation's church attendance during the vacation season. "Up and down," he replied. "Up in the mountains and down at the coast." *(Patricia C. Agee, in Reader's Digest)***

**In our parish the pastor, apparently fed up with all the excuses given over the years as to why people don't go to church, included “Ten Reasons Why I Never Wash” in the Sunday bulletin:**

**1. I was forced to wash as a child.**

**2. People who wash are hypocrites--they think they are cleaner than everybody else.**

**3. There are so many different kinds of soap, I can't decide which one is right.**

**4. I used to wash, but I got bored and stopped.**

**5. I wash on special occasions, like Christmas and Easter.**

**6. None of my friends wash.**

**7. I'll start washing when I get older and dirtier.**

**8. I don't have time.**

**9. The bathroom is never warm enough in winter or cool enough in summer.**

**10. People who make soap are only after your money. *(Mary O'Connor, in Catholic Digest)***

**There was a pastor who wished his Easter congregation a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year. He was certain he wouldn't see many of the attendants again until the following Easter. *(Edward F. Cox)***

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