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An address by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L. B. Pearson, delivered at the Yorkminster Baptist Church, Toronto, March 25, 1953.

I am glad to be with you on such an important occasion in the history of your church as the twenty-fifth anniversary of its present magnificent home. I congratulate you on reaching this milestone and I offer my tribute to the constructive service rendered to the community by Yorkminster over these years; first under that great preacher and that great man, Dr. Cameron, and now under the pastorate of Mr. Davies.

The essential value of a church, however is not measured primarily in terms of community service but in the contribution it makes to the moral well-being and the spiritual comfort of the individual men and women who compose its membership. You yourselves are the best judges of what your church has meant to each of you in this regard. I'm sure that Yorkminster meets this test as well.

I acknowledge with gratitude this opportunity of sharing with you at Yorkminster memories of the past and hopes for the future which grow out of them. It is wise and fitting that we should recall the foundations of our institutions and keep alive the memory of the men and women of faith who built and strengthened them. So tonight we think of those dedicated few who in 1870, after taking counsel with God and with one another, resolved to open a mission in the town of Yorkville just outside of what was then the northern boundary of Toronto.

Church occasions -- services, anniversaries, missionary gatherings, Sunday school meetings, even picnics and socials -- are close to my own experience and to my own memories. In my early days, the only places that loomed larger in my life than the church were my parsonage-home and, possibly, my school. I confess, looking back at those days of a Methodist childhood, that there were moments when I thought that Junior League at 10, morning service at 11, Sunday school at 2:30 and occasionally evensong at 7 was too crowded a schedule for a small boy who should have been given more time on Sunday to devour the books of G.A. Henty which he was able to secure from the Sunday school library.

But now, from the vantage point of 40 years later, I know what a priceless heritage I was given then for later life, through my upbringing in a church-parsonage atmosphere, by Christian parents who made us so rich in the possession of the things that mattered that we didn't even know that we were missing anything in worldly goods.