



S/Sgt. Ron Savidan takes a turn at the pulpit to thank the La Ronge Lutheran Fellowship for their support of his officers, staff and volunteers, with Rev. Wayne Olson listening in the background.

Photo by Carmen Pauls

Church honours La Ronge RCMP

Oct. 23, 2001

People may complain and point fingers, but God loves the RCMP.

"We will continue to pray for your safety and well-being as you go about your business, putting your lives on the line for us.... This pleases God," Rev. Wayne Olson said Sunday, looking out toward the pews where uniformed police officers brushed elbows with parishioners at a special service honouring the RCMP.

God calls us not to despise those in authority, but to praise them and lift up prayers that God would intervene in their lives, protecting them and giving them sound judgement as they lead, Olson told his congregation at the La Ronge Lutheran Fellowship.

This was modelled by Jesus, as he called on believers to "give to Caesar what is Caesar's," paying taxes and respecting the authorities God has put in place, Olson said.

While this special service for the RCMP was planned long before the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and the local vandalism spree, those events added an extra "oomph" to

Olson's words:

"Prior to Sept. 11, I thought we were pretty safe," the American-born pastor admitted during a post-service luncheon. The attacks "shook my foundation. There's nowhere we're safe on this earth except in the arms of Jesus."

"I see what goes on in the dark," and the RCMP are very much needed in La Ronge, said S/Sgt. Ron Savidan, who stood at the pulpit in his uniform.

The RCMP has existed for 128 years, so it's just a year younger than Canada itself, Savidan said. That, he feels, must prove that some divine power is backing it.

"We do do it without the 'thank you', and we'll continue doing it, because that's what we're called to," he told the congregation.

Even so, he said, the "thank you" is very much welcomed, not only on behalf of the RCMP officers, but for all the others who serve alongside them.

These include the RCMP's support staff (stenos, radio operators, guards and matrons), as well as their volunteer

auxiliary constables, police management boards, and affiliates such as Northern Region Victim Services and its volunteers, the KOSAR and CASARA search and rescue teams, and La Ronge/Air Ronge Crime Watch. In all, Savidan estimates that 125 people work for or assist the La Ronge RCMP.

However, there are also the "unsung, unrecognized" people — such as the ex-drug addict whom Savidan calls to talk with youths picked up for drug offences, or the man who one day saw a young fellow trudging to hockey practice, and now gives the boy a ride to the Uniplex whenever it's needed.

"What the police do is try and keep the community safe so you can live and work and help your fellow man," Savidan said.

"Sometimes we don't think we deserve it (the praise), but when I think of what our officers do, they're just ordinary young people who've done some extraordinary things."

Carmen Pauls Staff