



May 2001

The Evil Spirit Of Indifference

As our loving Savior wept bitter tears of sadness over the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the destruction which would come upon them, due to their indifference to the truth (Lk. 19:41), so should faithful brethren now be weeping over The Evil Spirit Of Indifference which is sweeping over our brotherhood like a deadly plague, wielding spiritual death and destruction to multitudes of eternity-bound souls.

Never in our lives have we seen the tragic pall which is now hanging over our precious brotherhood due to a pernicious indifference. Adding to this terrible problem is the fact that so many are completely indifferent toward this evil spirit. This is the very thing which has so greatly encouraged the problem in the first place. If this attitude continues it will only cause the problem to worsen. If ever there was a time when we need to be awakened to reality it is at this very time. Soldiers of Christ need to arise and put their armor on. The time that passes will be measured in terms of more and more lost souls, who will never see the portals of glory and enjoy the blessings which our Lord has prepared for those who truly love and serve Him in this life.

Before going further we want to define the word "indifference," even though comprehension of the word is quite adequate with most of us. *Webster's College Dictionary* defines it as: "1. lack of interest or concern. 2. unimportance; little or no concern." In addition to *Webster's* definition we often use a number of words and terms to convey the idea, such as: lukewarm, laziness, "So what?", "What difference does it make?" and perhaps most used – "I don't care." We see this expanded definition reflected in attitudes expressed and in excuses given. Indeed, **Indifference** covers a wide area and its potential for spiritual destruction is hard to measure, but without doubt it is one of the greatest. However, it is a painful fact that many aren't aware of this, and there are seemingly more and more who don't care, they're indifferent.

In order to get some idea as to the enormity of the problem we now face due to indifference, we need to give attention to a number of important things and we begin by considering:

THE EXTENT OF INDIFFERENCE

The extent of this evil which is prevailing within a great portion of the beautiful bride of Christ is enormous. It is by far the greatest we've ever seen and it only seems to worsen with the passing of every single day. From all across the country and from some foreign countries we hear the same sad story of evil indifference and the damage that is being done to the cause of Christ. Satan is having a heyday.

Not only is indifference sapping the strength of the cause of Christ virtually worldwide geographically, members of churches are being influenced at every level, from the pew to the pulpit and to the highest level of leadership. Indi-

vidual members of the church may be influenced by other members. Indifference begets indifference. The Bible class teachers may exhibit a spirit of indifference, thereby influencing their students. Elders and/or others in leadership often display a “don’t care” attitude about things of importance, thereby dampening the spirits of those they lead. In an increasing number of instances elders are in the forefront in indifference to what God’s word teaches, choosing rather to do their own thing or the things the people want. Yes, preachers are more and more demonstrating a spirit of indifference when it comes to standing for what God wants rather than what man wants. It may be that self interests are being served, and those interests are not such as edify people spiritually.

The same influence which affects a congregation by a “trickle down” effect from the top in leadership to the average member is taking a toll within our schools. Those in control in our schools quite often demonstrate a “don’t care” attitude with regard to God’s word as their guide — as long as the money rolls in. Which of our schools today stands upright doctrinally as did nearly all of them forty years ago? They have become a liability rather than an asset to the cause of Christ, or are fast becoming such.

Let God be thanked for those individuals who still have their sights set on walking in “the old paths” of Jeremiah 6:16. Such brethren may well expect some unjust criticism and treatment from those who have joined the throngs of those who no longer care about our Lord’s will, but only their own self-satisfying agenda. I can personally testify to the fact that some of these brethren can be mean-spirited and unkind to those who “stand fast in the faith.” It is so good to hear from brethren across our land and from other lands who still have a great love for God’s truth and are greatly concerned that it be upheld. We of this frame of mind need to encourage each other as much as possible in these “perilous times.” We can make a difference if we try.

The “Sound” Indifferent. A real tragedy is that some individuals and congregations who claim to be “sound in the faith” are plagued by indifference. They do not teach outright error in word, nevertheless they are lacking in concern. A case in point is seen in a lack of attendance at church services. Attendance is almost never what it could be and should be. It is not unusual for attendance to drop by half from the Sunday morning worship hour to midweek services. Yet, some of these congregations would claim to be “sound.” How could such be the case when up to half of the congregation is plagued by indifference so much so that they don’t care whether or not they meet with the saints, brothers and sisters in God’s spiritual family?

Though it may be just my imagination, it seems that some brethren have some sort of odd idea that “being faithful” has nothing to do with services other than on Sunday and mid-week. In a gospel meeting, if it continues through Wednesday night (they’re getting shorter all the time), some may venture out on that night, but as for Monday and Tuesday – That’s definitely out! Where is that desire which should characterize a servant of the Lord? That is, a desire to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18). Is the joy of associating with brothers and sisters in the Lord lacking within us? Has a spirit of indifference robbed us of a desire for spiritual food and Christian fellowship? I knew a man many years ago who said, “We just have too much preaching!” Not many will come out and say the same thing but they demonstrate it by their actions. An age of indifference would likely be characterized by a decrease in time given to spiritual activities. Gospel meetings are getting shorter all the time. Vacation Bible Schools are now a “one day affair,” or less, with more than a few. These things are happening with those brethren who claim to be “sound.” The idea of being “sound” and at the same time indifferent doesn’t harmonize, as far as I can tell.

Another case in point relative to attendance. The *Banner of Truth* Lectures were held June 4 - 7. The lectures were indeed a great success, as viewed by many in attendance. The lessons were second to none and interest on the part of those present was very high. At the same time there was evidence of indifference relative to the lectures. While we had people attend from far off places like: Virginia, Ohio, Michigan, and other states, the attendance from some “sound” local congregations was nil or almost so. With many it could have been nothing but lack of concern, or indifference. However, we are looking forward to a much better lectureship next year, and anticipate a greater attendance.

Another example of lack of concern with some who claim to be “sound,” is a lack of willingness to engage in acts of services which they are well qualified to do. A greater portion of the work done by most congregations is done by a rather small percentage of the members.

The “Liberal” Indifferent. The indifference seen in the more liberal-minded brethren is in their attitude toward God’s authority. While they may be quite active in some areas, it may well be in those areas which are for the pleasures and enjoyment of people, not to please God. Whether or not these activities are sanctioned by God’s word makes little or even no difference. In earlier times we have noted the many forms of entertainment, recreation and things of

pleasure which appeal to the likes of men. Those engaging in such things make little attempt to show that they are authorized by God. It is more of a matter of: We like it and we are going to do it!. When people act on such basis as that it is nonsensical to claim concern for God's word. In addition to the indifference evidenced in the areas mentioned above, there are other areas.

INDIFFERENCE IS EVIDENT WHEN BRETHREN FOLLOW MEN

In the area of spiritual things it has always been wrong to follow men rather than God. When men follow men and transgress God's will they are demonstrating indifference toward God's will. Inspired history reveals a variety of examples of this. In the not too distant past men have arisen who had a following in spiritual error. Those followers have accepted the teaching and practice of their leaders when they were in clear violation of God's word. Indifference.

The above people, leaders and followers, are often referred to as a **CULT**. *Webster's* definition of a "cult" reads in part:

"2. a group that devotes itself to or venerates a person, ideal, fad, etc. 3. a. a religion or sect considered to be false, unorthodox, or extremist. b. the members of such a religion or sect."

From the above definition we see that the word "cult" is applied to a variety of people. In the religious world of today a number of cults are recognized: Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Scientists, and others. Some of the more extreme cults have been: Jim Jones and followers, Heaven's Gate, and the group at Waco, Texas. Some of these cultists have been so devoted to their leaders that they have committed physical suicide when instructed to do so. This is such a tragedy when people will take their own lives when instructed to do so by those who are so completely in opposition to God's will. This is tragic for sure, but what of those who will follow a leader to the point of committing spiritual suicide? What would be worse?

If those extreme cultists had had respect and concern for God's revealed will, they never would have become such. As we give attention to the "cults" within the Lord's church, both leaders and followers, we want to emphasize the fact that they are committing spiritual suicide, but not physical.

Some might even deny that we have cults within the church, but that doesn't alter the facts. Of course, the cults within the Lord's church vary in the degree of their loyalty to their leader. But when it is the case that a man is followed in that which is contrary to God's will, and God's will is relegated to second place or farther, we are talking about a cult. This very condition is seen with such men as: Rubel Shelly, Max Lucado, Joe Beam, Jeff Walling, J. Wayne Kilpatrick, Buddy Bell, and others. Of somewhat lesser notoriety, we have leaders in our area. One leader here is being followed by a number of people. Even a number of congregations feel loyal to him and will not dare call his hand on matters of error. Of those who defend him in error, including even elders, some will castigate those who oppose his error. Unless *Webster's* definition of a cult is flat out denied, we have a cult right here at home. Though the leader claims he has no followers, facts speak much louder than words. To call a "cult" by some other name doesn't change the facts.

Over the years I've known of people who demonstrated a loyalty to a person which was stronger than their loyalty to the truth. They demonstrated this by following the person in error, thereby demonstrating indifference to the truth. These people often do not want to know the truth about their leader, if that truth would in any way show their loyalty to be wrong. A brother related to me how that he had at one time been in a congregation where there was an effort to bring in the Crossroads Movement, then headed by Chuck Lucas. When this brother, to the preacher, called attention to the error of Lucas and the Crossroads movement, the preacher responded by saying: "If you oppose Church Lucas you oppose the church." On one occasion a man asked me about a certain preacher of quite a bit of notoriety. As I began to tell him some things, which he didn't want to hear he responded by saying, "I don't want to hear any more." Not long ago a man asked me about a preacher that I have known for thirty years. When I mentioned the fact that the congregation where this preacher had been preaching for quite some time, had recently split with most of the people along with the preacher leaving, and that the preacher was now involved in secular work instead of preaching, the man said I must have gotten the wrong information. It is a matter of fact that some simply do not want to hear the facts about things if the facts are not to their liking. Their concern for the truth has taken second place or less. In this their indifference toward the truth has been reflected. This reminds me of the attitude of the Jews as described by Isaiah: "Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits" (Isa. 30:10).

The loyalty to men which is stronger than loyalty to God's truth is being seen with regard to our schools. With

some their school is their “sacred cow.” One may criticize error within a congregation, but lay off our schools! Even though the school goes off course into error, as is so common today, the loyalty of its supporters often continues. If this is not reflecting a lack of concern as to what our Lord says, what is it? No one could honestly deny that a serious degree of indifference toward God’s truth is shown. I just recently wrote the President of F-HU, expressing concern about the recent appointment to the board of trustees. I have not heard one word in response to my letter. But I don’t know what he could have said. Perhaps, that is why he has said nothing. This pall of indifference over our brotherhood is a matter of serious concern. How is it that faithful brethren are no more concerned than they are? Evidently, they do not understand the seriousness of the matter. Note: I just this minute got a call from a reader of *Banner of Truth*, requesting that their name be removed from our mailing list. The caller did not do me the favor of pointing out wherein the paper was or has been wrong, as Galatians 6:1 would suggest. However, the caller did say they were getting a “new fellowship building” and that the congregation was growing. I mention this because it is such a common mind-set. When people opt for the things which please them rather than what pleases God, that is called, and rightly so, indifference toward the truth.

INDIFFERENCE, A CAUSE FOR MOST SERIOUS CONCERN

The present state of indifference is so strong that it is a most difficult thing to arouse brethren to a state of real concern. When people “don’t care” the options as to what can be done to help them are severely limited. The little humorous note with regard to the person who was asked, “What is the most serious threat to the church; lack of knowledge or indifference ?” and answered, “I don’t know and I don’t care,” may have a more important message than many realize. If a serious study of the concern shown about indifference by New Testament characters, including our Lord himself, does not bring one out of the sleep of indifference, then I’m at a loss to know what would. Let us note a few of those examples of concern.

In John 6, as Jesus spoke to the murmuring Jews, telling them that he was “the bread which came down from heaven” and that they must eat of that bread and drink of his blood, the Jews responded by saying it was “a hard saying.” John then says, “From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him” (v. 66). When Jesus asked the twelve if they would not also go away, Peter responded by saying, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Here is a clear example of indifference toward truth on the part of the “many disciples” who walked no more with the Lord. We know the Lord doesn’t want anyone to perish, be it due to outright indifference to truth or any other thing (2 Pet. 3:9). Many are walking “no more” with the Savior today due to a lack of concern for His soul-saving truth. That’s indifference!

The apostle Paul pours out his heart to the Philippians as he warns them of those who are so indifferent to God’s truth that they had become “enemies of the cross of Christ.” Paul wrote: “For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ” (Phil. 3:18). Are we ever brought to tears due to those, even our brethren, who no longer have any concern for God’s will? The above was not just a passing matter of concern to Paul, he had told the brethren “often” about this sad matter.

Another example of great concern about indifference is seen in Christ’s letter to the church at Laodicea. That the church at Laodicea was completely unacceptable to our Lord is seen in that He says not one good thing about them, but to the contrary He would vomit them out. In that letter to the Laodiceans (Rev. 3:14-22) our Lord lets them know that he knows their “works” (v. 15). Their works were “lukewarm,” (v. 16) a word that stands for indifference. Due to that indifference, Christ would “spue” [vomit] them out. Our Lord was not happy in what he would do to these unconcerned members of the church. We know that because he offers them advice as to how they can cure their spiritual sickness. If only they would “knock” he would “open the door” (v. 20). He asked them to “be zealous therefore, and repent” (v. 19). As “overcomers” they could “sit” with Christ in his throne (v. 21). As they could do so, thank the Lord that people can do that today if they love the Lord.

Without doubt, the most touching example of concern about indifference is that described by Luke as he relates the account of Christ’s entry into the city of Jerusalem. Luke said, “And when he was come near, he beheld the city and wept over it” (Lk. 19:41). We are told that the word “wept” here used by Christ means that he “burst into sobs,” or “tears.” If our Lord was so deeply touched by the indifference of the Jews in Jerusalem He is surely deeply touched by our brethren today who are exhibiting an evil spirit of indifference. How, I ask, can our brethren today be so unconcerned when Christ gave of himself to die on the cross of Calvary that we might have life? If we aren’t brought to tears by the example of our loving Lord, is there any thing that could bring us to that point? The state of unconcern which exists among those who take the name of Christ as Christians today is a matter of fact. That being

the case, it might be well to reflect on some of the causes which bring about this sad state of unconcern and rejection.

SOME CAUSES OF INDIFFERENCE

One major cause is that of materialism. There is no better example than that of the church at Laodicea, which we mentioned earlier. The major cause of Laodicea's "lukewarm" condition was stated clearly. Christ puts it plainly when he said, "Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. 3: 17). Bear in mind that these people were members of the church, but this alone was not sufficient. The lack of "need" which had overcome them had obviously included our Lord and the spiritual treasures which can be found only in Him. Personally, I believe that the condition in which we live today, materially speaking, is having the same type of influence upon many church members as it did in Laodicea.

Another major cause of indifference presently must be that of the liberal thinking spirit which has captivated so many of the Lord's people. When people don't take God at His word, His message becomes meaningless to a great degree, and that's what liberalism really is. In other words, what God says about wrath upon the children of disobedience is not taken seriously. When the "negatives," which make up a great portion of God's message to man, are ignored, people are encouraged to do what pleases them rather than being deeply concerned as to what pleases God. People who are encouraged to "feel good about themselves" when they are not right with God can easily encourage a spirit of indifference as to accountability to God. When people are led to believe that salvation may be found in the man-made religions around us, this by implication negates the great and important teaching by Christ and others concerning the "one church" and the salvation which is only available therein.

The Social Gospel which is in vogue in many places today focuses upon the "here and now" and what people want to make them feel good. The emphasis upon the hereafter is largely lacking. It is this system of error which has had a part to play in the providing of all sorts of entertainment by churches. The more often seen hoopla and ballyhoo relative to that which is being engaged in by an increasing number of congregations is a great encouragement toward indifference relative to the area of spiritual things. When a spirit of "don't care" toward spiritual things prevails, so does indifference.

Perhaps we should have given some attention to the failure to "desire the sincere milk of the word" which is needed to grow (I Pet. 2:2). Both materialism and liberalism work together to discourage the serious study of God's word. When God's word is not studied as God intended, then both materialism and liberalism find an ideal condition in which to grow. This is a case of one evil encouraging another or more.

CLOSING OBSERVATIONS

Our Lord's church has never been in the clutches of evil indifference in our lives as it is now. The bold display of a "don't care" attitude is seen widely. It's taking a frightening toll!

Doctrinal error has already engulfed a great portion of our brotherhood, but as sad as that is, The Evil Spirit Of Indifference has been equally harmful if not more so. Indifference toward truth results in liberal thinking and false doctrines and practices, but indifference is affecting both the liberal element within the church and also that part which claims to be "sound." This evil has become so common place that many never seem to give it a thought. Indifference is worse than error sincerely believed. With honest people, if they are in error they can still be taught the truth, whereas those who "don't care," are often a lost cause.

Brethren, those who love the truth of God, let us work with all our might to combat the evil with which we are now faced. God is on our side but we must do our part. And "our part" is to "contend for the faith" (Jude 3), "stand fast in the faith" (I Cor. 16:13), and to be "stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58). We need not be discouraged in we maintain our faith. John declared that the victory which overcomes the world is our faith (I John 5:4).

Since we are not "ignorant" of the devil's "devices" and since we've been warned regarding the "wiles of the devil" we can make the necessary preparation to overcome him. If we truly love God (I John 5:4), we will "keep" his words, and both he and the Son will abide in us (John 14:23). If we "live Godly in Christ Jesus" we may expect persecution (2 Tim. 3:12), but heaven will be worth it all. - - -Walter W. Pigg

Northwest Florida School Of Biblical Studies To Add Full-Time Instructor

We are pleased to announce that brother Alan Adams has accepted a full-time teaching position with the Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies. He will begin work the fall quarter 2001.

Alan has a reputation of dedication and faithfulness in Christian service and life, and is an able student of God's word. His particular duties will involve teaching language courses, textual courses, and serving as editor of the school paper, *Labourers Together With God*.

We believe his background in education and his work experience amply qualify him for this position. Having spent a year at Freed-Hardeman College, he received a Bachelor of Science degree from Murray State University. With emphasis on Bible training, he graduated from the Bellview Preacher Training School and spent upwards of two years of study in the Tennessee Graduate School of Christian Doctrine and Apologetics. While a missionary in Taiwan and in pursuit of fluency of Mandarin Chinese, he studied in the Tapei Language Institute for one year, followed by two years of study in the National Taiwan Normal University (Mandarin Training Center).

He has a diverse and solid record of work experience that makes him suited for the work at hand. He has been a high school teacher, and for more than twenty five years has worked as an evangelist with local churches of Christ in Indiana, Florida, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Taiwan. He has been with the Cowan church of Christ from 1994 to the present.

Unique to his work as an evangelist, under the auspices of the Northside church of Christ, Meridian, MS, he worked as a missionary from 1983-1994 in the Republic of China, Taiwan. He preached in the Chinese language, and has several years of experience as a translator (oral and written) between the English and Chinese languages. As well, he served as an English instructor in various military schools of the Republic of China: The National Defense Language Center; the Military Intelligence School; and the Military Management School.

Alan is forty-seven years of age and has been married for twenty-seven years to the former Susan Christine Pigg, daughter of long-time gospel preacher, Walter Pigg. Susan is a faithful Christian, homemaker and mother.

Alan and Susan have four children: Walter Justin Adams, faithful Christian married to a faithful Christian; Rachel Naomi (Adams) Petrochko, faithful Christian married to a faithful Christian; Wesley Ken Adams, faithful Christian; and Seth Stephen (Chou Eln-hsin: a beautiful "gift" from their tenure in Taiwan) Adams.

They also have three grandchildren: Emma Caroline Petrochko; Henry Oliver Petrochko; and , George Theodore Adams.

The Ensley church of Christ, whose work is the Northwest School of Biblical Studies, has been blessed with success in their efforts to provide a place for intense training of preachers. This success has warranted the need for more teachers. Yet, the Ensley church cannot do it alone. It will be necessary to raise funds to assist us in our support of Alan and his family. We believe this is a needed and worthwhile effort and are asking that individuals and congregations please contribute to our request for Alan's support on a monthly or one-time basis. Your laboring together with us in this venture would be greatly appreciated. We need to raise these funds by September 1, 2001. You may send contributions to: Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies, 57 Hanna Circle, Pensacola, FL 32534. Please earmark it: Support for Alan Adams.

Kenneth Burleson, Director Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies

A Personal Statement

Dear Brethren,

It is with joy, soberness, and confessedly not a little trepidation that I acknowledge and announce my intention to begin, this September, my work as a full time instructor in the Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies.

It would also be fair to add that this hodgepodge of emotions is also tinged with sadness in that it involves leaving the beloved Cowan church. For nigh on to seven years I have so enjoyed working with this sound and loving church and under her eldership. It is only because of the nature of the job I've been asked to do that I have decided to leave this jewel of the kingdom. The elders have been so understanding of my reasons for this change and are graciously willing to commend my family and me to those who desire references. Feel free to contact these men: Bill Pickney (931) 967-6615; Mike Sparks (931) 967-6189; and Bill Keith (931) 967-4825.

Brother "Ken" is a longtime friend and mentor for and under whom I will have absolutely no problem working.

The Ensley church, in Pensacola, whose work is the Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies, is made up of members, and overseen by elders all of whom I've known and respected for years.

I will be teaching 10-15 hours a week (which hours will increase the second year). In addition to textual and other courses, I will especially be teaching language courses: biblical languages and English. I will edit the school paper—*Laborers Together With God*—and travel and speak on behalf of the school for public relations and student recruitment. Given the school's increased enrollment, I will also function as the Dean of Students. In short: I will be busy.

I lay no claim to unique scholarship; yet, I accept the job in full confidence that I can do it.

I bring more than twenty-five years' experience to the task of preparing men to preach. I am a practicing "evangelist," in the true sense of the term. I believe that in addition to academics, I can also help promising preachers to avoid some all-too-common personal traits and attendant problems that hinder the work of gospel preachers.

Will you please help me to help?

In Him,

Alan Adams

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A Word From The Editor:

I have known our son-in-law for those twenty-seven years, and a little more. I worked with him for a little more than three years in Taiwan, and I had him for my translator for all that time. I know of his ability as a teacher, and I would consider him as being in the top class. In years gone by he has expressed his desire to teach in a school made up of Christians. I'm fully convinced that he will make a great contribution to the school. Therefore, I don't hesitate to ask brethren to support him and make this work possible. Since he will need to raise his total support for the time being, any contribution of any amount, by individuals and/or congregations, for one time or continued, will be for a great cause and greatly appreciated. I don't believe there is a better school than the one above. I have the utmost confidence in its reliability.

- - Walter W. Pigg

The Blight of Spiritual Apathy

Don R. Waggoner

Apathy is a growing malady among those who claim to be New Testament Christians. There are many among us who seemingly have little or no interest in things spiritual; in saving lost souls and the church, or dangers to the church from those who seek to destroy it.

The attitude of many individual Christians and even entire congregations today can aptly be described by the words Jesus used to address the congregation at Laodicea: "Thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked;" (Rev. 3:17).

As we enter the 21st Century, concerned brethren everywhere are asking the question: What will be the fate of the church during the 21st Century, will it survive? Certainly, we can answer this question with the affirmative. We know that the church will survive, based on the promise of Jesus as given in Matthew 16:18, when he said, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Also, prophecy concerning the church declares, "It shall stand forever" (Dan. 2:44).

Yes, the church will survive, but the question is: How healthy will it be? There was a time when the emphasis of our preaching and teaching was on saving sinners. We still need to do this for it is the mission of the church as given by Jesus in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16). However, if the church is to remain viable and grow and stand firmly on our preaching and teaching of today must emphasize saving the church from the dangers which confront it.

The greatest deterrent to confronting these dangers is the indifferent attitude displayed by many across our brotherhood who refuse to be informed about, or even discuss those dangers. In too many instances members don't want to hear preaching about anything controversial. Elders tell preachers not to preach on controversial issues and preachers don't preach on them.

One could ask the question: Why are so many so indifferent about the things that are literally destroying the precious body of Christ? Many reasons could be given, however, in my opinion, two of the most prominent reasons are materialism and worldliness, or immorality in our present society.

MATERIALISM

The Scriptures are replete with admonitions against placing inordinate emphasis on material possessions. Jesus said, "Take heed and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the things which he possesseth" (Lk. 12:15). Many in our world today are afflicted with the disease of "I - itus" as was the foolish man of Jesus' parable in Luke 12. Selfishness abounds and the goal of many is to obtain "all that I can for myself and mine." Unfortunately, this disease is contagious and many in the church have "caught" it. Their own selfish interests have become more important than the welfare of the kingdom of God. Love of material things has taken the place of God, Jesus Christ and the church in their lives. Spiritual things are no longer of interest and the admonition of Jesus to "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" has been all but forgotten.

WORLDINESS/IMMORALITY

Jesus said, "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Matt. 24:12). We live today in a "sick society" and certainly it can be said that iniquity abounds on every hand. Just as our Lord warned that in times such as this the love of many would grow cold, it can be said, sadly, of many of those claiming to be disciples of Christ that their love has "grown cold."

Even those in the church who are well acquainted with Bible teachings on sensuality and sin have evidently decided to ignore these simple teachings and engage in worldliness. It seems that the attitude of Michah's day is popular. That is, "every man did that which was right in his own eyes. Many are determined to do what they want to do in spite of what the Bible says.

Because of the desire for material things and worldliness/immorality, among other things, the fate of the church is no longer of interest or concern to some. On the other hand, complacency, lukewarmness and indifference prevail.

My wife and I have spent more than 15 years living in foreign countries. It did not take long for us to realize that a vast number of our brethren have no real interest in the souls of others in far away lands. The thought seems to be: "Out of sight, out of mind." I believe that many of our brethren have the same thought concerning the insidious dangers facing the church. That is, "Don't bother me. I don't want to know about them. If I remain uninformed, I won't have to be concerned about them."

Such indifference is one of the most useful and successful methods Satan has at his disposal. May God help us to heed the words of the apostle Peter: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Pet. 5:8).

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Editor's Note:

Brother Don Waggoner and his wife, Judy, have given much to the cause of mission work in other countries. Don has served as a "Vocational Missionary." That is, as a chemical engineer he has been able to support himself while at the same time doing more than some full-time missionaries to spread the gospel. He is responsible for much of the mission work which has been done in Indonesia. He and Judy spent about eleven years there, and established congregations where the church did not exist at all. Many are now Christians as a result of their work. They've also worked in some other countries.

Though Don has now retired from secular work, he and Judy have not retired from work in the kingdom of Christ. Brother Don is now serving as an elder. He is a man who loves the truth and stands up for it, as does his wife, Judy. We need many more like them.

Wretched, Miserable, Poor, Blind, and Naked...

By David Lemmons

The problem of **Indifference** has been a plague at least from the time of Noah, if not previous to that time. Before the great flood, Noah preached to the disobedient souls (I Pet. 3:18-20), pleading for the people to hear his message of coming destruction, but no one (saving Noah's own family) cared for what he said. The great weeping prophet of Anathoth, Jeremiah, lived in a time when the prophets were saying, "*Peace, peace, where there is no peace*" (Jer. 6:14). Surely this would constitute one of the finest examples of a state of indifference in the entire Bible. Toward the ending of the first century, as Jesus inspected the church at Laodicea, He saw a people who said of themselves, "*...I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing*" (Rev. 3:17), but the descriptive terms that the Lord found appropriate were: WRETCHED, MISERABLE, POOR, BLIND, and NAKED!

Sometimes preachers today wonder at and are discouraged by the similarities of their own hearers to those of Noah, Jeremiah, and Jesus. Indifference is defined as, "Having no particular interest in or concern for; apathetic" [*American Heritage Talking Dictionary*, version 4.0]. Considering this definition, there are multitudes of things today toward which the Christian

ought to be indifferent. However, it seems that many of the things which ought not to make any difference are the very things that are making a difference in the hearts of Christians and the result is that so many Christians are fitting the description of the title of this article. There is so much today that uses up the time, thoughts, funds, etc., of Christians that the truly important matters of eternal significance become pushed aside with an ever increasing and easy indifference. Should we not, as Christians, take a lesson from the examination that Jesus made of the Laodicean saints? Do we not remember how our Lord expressed himself regarding these indifferent ones? After all, these were the ones to whom Jesus said, "...I will (*See page 12*) *spue thee out of my mouth*" (Rev. 3:16).

There are so many problems in the church toward which many and probably most Christians have developed an easy indifference. Is the church being attacked by change agents? Well yes, but I've got to get to the ballgame. Have we, as members of the churches of Christ, lost our moniker of being "walking Bibles"? I'm sure that is true, but there's a 30% off sale at the mall. Is congregation after congregation being consumed with a social-gospel-entertainment-oriented slant, far away from the mission of the church? Yes, but the fish are biting. Do we have fewer missionaries today than 20 years ago? Well, yes, but there's this great hiking trail I really need to explore, etc.

Is it possible that we really do not care about the warning given to the apathetic and indifferent saints at Laodicea? Jesus said, "*As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent*" (Rev. 3:19). The fact that the church has been purchased by the precious blood of Jesus (Acts 20:28) ought to be a fact that will shake us up out of our indifferent ways and point us toward setting priorities that are in line with things that are really important (Matt. 6:33). *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches* (Rev. 3:22).

- - 3268 Palma Rd., Calvert City, KY 42029

What about this website ?

A friend called my attention to a website which is known as "**Interactive Bible.**" My friend had logged on to the site and noted that the faithful congregations in his area were not mentioned on the website. Only congregations which are known for not supporting orphan homes and opposing congregational cooperation were listed. Viewers would be directed to preachers of this persuasion in response to Bible questions they asked, that being part of the services offered by the website.

While websites may be used to set forth the truth, error may be set forth as well. We need to be careful what we hear - *Editor*

Hickory Grove and *Banner of Truth* Lectures

Dear brethren, we want to take this opportunity to thank all who were involved in the First Annual *Banner of Truth* Lectureship. The first two we need to thank are Walter Pigg and Alan Adams, for all the work they did in conceiving the idea and seeing it through until the end. We also know that they could not have done their job without the help of all those who volunteered their time and energy in making arrangements and putting the finishing touches on the lectureship. We can't recall all who had a part but we do appreciate all help, no matter how small.

Next, we need to thank the speakers, some of whom traveled some distance to be with us. All the lessons were excellent, and most importantly they were scriptural. We are grateful for men of the caliber of those who are willing to stand for the truth uncompromisingly.

Finally, we need to thank all who attended the lectureship. Without you the lectureship would not have been the great success that it was. Some of you could only be present for one or two lectures, others never missed a single lesson. Either way, you played an important role in the lectures.

As we close we want to encourage everyone to be making plans now to attend next year's Second Annual *Banner Of Truth* Lectureship. Whether or not you attended this year's lectures, we hope to see you next year.

For the Hickory Grove church of Christ,
Elders: James Lockhart and Mike Smith

Editor's Note: In addition to the above, the church at Dexter is to be commended for their part in the lectures as co-sponsors. This is a good example of congregations working together. A special thanks goes to bro. Richard Guill for all that he did to help with the lectures.

FELLOWHELPERS

March & April 2001

L. June Bassett	80.00
Anonymous	100.00
Lou Nell Elkins	50.00
Green Plain	100.00
Alhambra	50.00
Anonymous	10.00
Virginia F. McCoy	20.00
Pine Ridge	150.00
Kay Williams	100.00
Donald R. Shiflett	200.00
Elizabeth Sublett	10.00
Kenneth Kemp	25.00
Wards Chapel	25.00
Maple Hill	200.00
Anonymous	50.00
John R. Brown	50.00
Berea	100.00
Edward J. Campbell	30.00
Emogene Collier	20.00
Joanne Hutchison	70.00
Troy G. Ray	20.00
James D. Jackson	30.00
Jim & Jackie Patchell	50.00
Larry Pennington	100.00
Gene Nesler	100.00
Bernice Sanders	<u>20.00</u>
Total March & April contribution	1,760.00

***“That we might be fellowhelpers
to the truth” (3rd John 8)***

We are ever grateful for your continued support of the Lord's work in which we are engaged. As our circulation continues to grow, so does our expense. But our brethren continue to supply our financial needs in a most generous way. All gifts, whether large or small, are most sincerely appreciated. In addition, it is a great encouragement to us to know that we have many brethren who are of "like mind" with regard to holding up God's will and opposing error. - *Ed.*

Banner of Truth Financial Report

March and April 2001

Balance on hand Mar. 1, 2001	14,564.73
March & April contribution	<u>1,760.00</u>
Total funds available	16,324.73
March and April expenses:	
Mailing Feb. & March B.O.T.	1,258.18
Mailing labels	25.57
Stamps	34.00
Service on press	107.00
Supplies, plates, etc.	197.70
Phone	15.33
Paper	1,600.00
Postage	<u>104.77</u>
	3,342.55
Total funds available	16,324.73
Less Mar. & Apr. expenses	<u>3,342.55</u>

Bal. on hand April 30, 2001 1,298.18

Our mailing costs, including “returns” and other items other than BOT, now run near \$700 per month. Our cost of paper and other supplies increases that cost somewhat. We are so thankful that we have the funds to meet the costs. We are firmly convinced that the benefits of *Banner of Truth* outweigh the costs by far. We thank you who are our *fellowhelpers*
 - - Editor

Attending Services and Attitudes

I talked to a lady in a church where I preached about attending all the services. Her response was: “I attend on Sunday morning and teach a class, and I attend Wednesday night. I believe that is more than I have to do.” I was told of two elders who didn’t attend Wednesday night services. They reasoned that, “We like to go fishing on Wednesday and we don’t read where we have to attend on Wednesday night.” I recall a brother saying, “I don’t believe we have to attend on Wednesday night.” I readily agree that we don’t **HAVE TO** do these things. But what of the consequences? What about the attitude which makes serving God only an **have to** affair? Is the motivation of **love** left out?

A Review of the First Annual *Banner of Truth* Lectures

By *Richard Guill*

The First Annual *Banner of Truth* Lectureship was held at the Curris Center on the campus of Murray State University in Murray, Kentucky on June 4-7, 2001. Sixteen different speakers delivered twenty-four great lessons on some very timely subjects, as they applied to the theme of “Christ And His Church In The Twenty-first Century.” All of the men who spoke on this lectureship prepared and delivered their lessons well. They knew what the Bible taught on their subjects and they were neither ashamed nor afraid to preach it.

Monday morning Joe Ruiz delivered the first lesson, on the subject of “God’s Role For Women In The Church,” and it was great. While I could classify all the lessons as being superb, the one which perhaps challenged and motivated many of us more than any other was Joe Ruiz’s lesson on Monday night on, “The Great Commission.”

While I wish I could say that the attendance was extraordinary, it wasn’t. Let’s face it, many of our brethren do not like bold, straightforward, “tell it like it is” preaching, as was done in the lectureship. And, as it is in most congregations, there are many brethren who do not attend any “extra” services, such as lectureships and gospel meetings in the area. Some will not even attend their own. But we do appreciate those brethren who love the truth and who attended. We had people from Virginia, Michigan, Ohio, and other states. One brother from Dexter stopped by the hospital in Murray on Monday morning, had his gallbladder removed, and was at the lectures that afternoon, and attended all the others! What was your excuse again?

I offer a very special thanks to the Dexter and Hickory Grove congregations for sponsoring this spiritual treat, and to brother Walter Pigg and Alan Adams for organizing the event and making all the arrangements. I am really looking forward to the Second Annual *Banner of Truth* Lectures next year, and I hope to see you there as well. Help us spread the word and encourage others to come.

Editor’s Note: The lectures, though somewhat tiring, were a great uplift to me. The very positive attitude toward God’s truth which prevailed was most encouraging. Many of those in attendance expressed how much they enjoyed the occasion. It is hard for me to understand how one who loves the Lord and his church, would not enjoy the association with others of like mind during a time of spiritual enjoyment. It may be that some just don’t understand what a lectureship is all about. It is our goal to inform brethren and we intend to make the Second Annual *Banner of Truth* Lectureship much more successful than this first one was.
 - - Editor

Banner of Truth Lectureship Tapes Available

Brother Jim Green taped the entire series of lectures. The entire set of video tapes are available for \$30.00, postpaid. Jim's address is: 2711 Spring Meade Blvd., Columbia, TN 38401. Phone: (931) 486 - 1364. E-mail address <jamesgreen@charter.net>

Address Changing??? It is our policy to delete the names of those who do not send us a change of address. Expense for "Returns" may be \$10 - \$12 monthly.

READERS' RESPONSE

"The Lectureship was excellent. Reminded me of some in the past, before many of our brethren went the way of denominations, which I left 'lock-stock-and barrel' some 38 years ago. The path of many of my brethren in whom I put so much faith and trust is sickening. Women preachers and all... - **Allen Rupert, Sr.**" - VA. *(I share the same disappointment. Though I didn't come out of a denomination, I have seen a rapid drift toward denominationalism by a great many of our brethren - Ed.)*

"Can you please send my son and his family the Banner of Truth. He is attending the Memphis School of Preaching and I think it will be a great help to him and his wife. I appreciate your stand for the truth. May God bless you as you continue to stand behind the cross." (Name withheld by editor). *(We are happy to add your son's name to our mailing list. We used to send a bundle of BOT to both the Knight Arnold congregation and the School of Preaching. The elders told us to stop sending the paper, but have never said why - Editor).*

"My name is Rick Hurst and I would like to receive Banner of Truth. I just came across it and am very impressed with its message. I preach and could use it as a teaching/preaching tool. I feel very much alone sometimes in my very conservative old fashioned way of thinking. Though the Bible is never changing, this world is and to preach the truth is to go against this new way. I will only preach the way God said to do it - **Rick Hurst.**" *(Rick, you are to be commended for your "conservative old fashioned way of thinking". This "new way" which is so prevalent today will lead people where they shouldn't want to go. That is, to hell and not to heaven - Editor).*

"Please add me to your mailing list to receive Banner of Truth. It is a very good publication - **Garmon Stroud.**" - AR. *(Tell your friends about BOT - Editor).*

"I have received your excellent paper for some time. I want to thank you for all the good work you do on the Banner of Truth. I really do enjoy getting it and thank God for you. We need encouragement always to stand for the truth. Would you please send the paper to my sister.... - **Clora Kesler.**" - IL. *(Thanks for sending your sister's name, to be added to our mailing list - Editor).*

"I am reading one of your issues of 'Banner of Truth,' and I would like to have it mailed to my address. I commend you for this fine publication. May the Lord bless your work for His cause - **James W. Ferguson.**" - AL. *(Thanks for your encouragement. The positive things we receive from readers mean much. But we also invite those who disagree with us to say so - Editor).*

"Greetings to you brethren at Hickory Grove. I have been receiving Banner of Truth for about a year and enjoy the truth that you present. Keep the good work. It is good to know there are those faithful men in the brotherhood who are trying to keep us informed of what is going on. If we don't call names how will we know who the liberal brethren and false teachers are? The apostle Paul was not like so many are today, not willing to call names we need to know about.... - **Charles Miller.**" *(You are so right about calling names, but some don't want to follow the examples we have in the Bible. Would you believe (you probably would) that an elder argued with me a short time ago that we could not use Paul as an example because he was an apostle. If we rule out the apostles as examples, then we wouldn't have much left. And, if we can rule out the apostles, why not rule out Christ? Some times when people want to do "their own thing" rather than the Lord's things, they try to find some way around the teaching of God's word, a false way - Editor).*

"Please stop sending the Hickory Grove C O C Newsletter. Thank you - **M. Whitman.**" - NC.

"I would like to continue to receive this much needed publication. May God bless your work as you preach, teach, persuade and publish God's glorious truth. Thank you for making this change. Thank you for this godly and righteous publication - **Michael Wilk.**" - PA. *(Thanks for sending your change of address. Now you will not miss an issue and you will not cause us to pay for a "return." We wish you well in your new work - Editor).*

"Thank you for the Banner of Truth. I'm enclosing a check for the work you are doing. Thanks again - **N. Lolley.**" - AL. *(We thank the Lord for people like you, who make our work possible. Thanks for the check. - Ed.)*

"I am writing this letter on behalf of a friend. While visiting the congregation of the Lord's church in Richmond, MO, I gave him some of my old copies of *Banner of Truth*. He was impressed with them and asked if I would see to it that his name was added to your mailing list....Keep up the good work, and may God bless you in this noble effort - **Shane Sallee.**" - KY. *(We thank you for sending us the name to be added. This helps us to have a mailing list which is made up of many who truly enjoy reading the paper - Editor).*

"Thank you for your excellent publication. I am between churches. Please accept my budgeted amount for this week to lay by in store - **Captain Johnie Wade.**" - TX. *(Thanks for the check. We wish you well in your new location. May the Lord richly bless - Editor).*

"Keep up the good work, many of us out here are depending on you. Thank you for your devotion and labors. Check enclosed - **Royce Adams.**"

"Hello, I hope this letter finds you and everyone at Hickory Grove doing well. I wanted to thank you for continuing to send me BOT. I look forward to reading each issue. All of the articles aid in my study of God's word as I continue to grow. I noticed in last month's issue that The BOT Lectures start soon. I would like to request a copy of the outlines or a book if they are printed (full text). It is unfortunate that I live so far away and am unable to make it to many of the lectureships....Thank you for your stand for the truth even when faced with opposition on all sides. We can never compromise when it comes to God's word. I have enclosed a check to help with BOT and the work which is being done by Hickory Grove. Thank you for your time - **Jason Oneal White.**" - CO. *(Jason, we have not printed the lectures or*

the outlines. We have thought about printing the lessons but it would be a great deal of work and we are not sure we have the time to do it. The lectures were video taped, and there is information in this issue of BOT as to where you can get them. Thanks for the check. You are so right in that we can "never compromise when it comes to God's word." It is so sad that so many are doing so - Editor).

"Please accept my small token of appreciation for your willingness to uphold the whole and absolute truth of God's word. The future doesn't look too bright for men willing to do so without compromise. It will certainly affect their standard of living because they probably will not preach for a large congregation or sell many books. But Jesus said it long ago. "They have their reward" (Mtt. 6:2). - **Jerry Statler.**" - **MI.** *(We thank you greatly for your generous check to help with our personal support. I agree with you that the prospects for the future are not too bright (financially wise) for those who are unwilling to compromise or water-down God's word in order to have financial support. It appears that too many are willing to compromise for a price - Editor).*

"Just a note to thank you for all the work you do on Banner of Truth. I am glad God has given you these insights to keep us informed on all the false teachers in the Lord's church. God bless you - **Charlene Johnson.**"

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View BOT on bro. David Lemmons' web at:

<http://www.hcis.net/users/dlemmons/BOTlist.htm>

Readers may get on David's **LemmonsAid e-mail** by sending an e-mail to the address below:

< LemmonsAid-Subscribe@YahooGroups.com >

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