

**Schedule of Meeting Times:**

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM  
*Speaker, Robert Emerson*  
 Study Sunday 10:00 AM  
 Worship Sunday Morn 11:00 AM  
 Worship Sunday Eve 5:00 PM  
*Singing every 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday evening*  
 Study Wednesday 7:00 PM

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“Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born of water and the Spirit** he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

—John 3:5

**Servants during August:**

**Songleader:** David (1), Peter (8), Stanley (15), Larry (22), David (29)

**Reading:** Robert

**Announcements:** Marty

**Table:** Larry, Mike M, Peter, Stanley

**Wednesday Lesson:** Larry (4), Stanley (11), Kris (18), Larry (25)

**Lawn Mowing (week starting):**

Larry (1), Kris (8), Marty (15), Stanley (22), Robert (29)

**Hays Mill church of Christ**

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# The Bible . Examiner

“Examine everything carefully...” —1 Thessalonians 5:21 NASB

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## Indifference: Tranquilizer of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church

By Dick Blackford

“Pssst! Hey, buddy. Want to be a member of a secret organization? I promise this secret is well protected and you won’t have to worry about being discovered. The name of this secret order? Pssst, listen closely. It’s called the church of Christ.”

Indifference is causing the church of our Lord to become a secret organization. It can tranquilize, paralyze, hypnotize, and minimize all attempts to evangelize. Did you hear about the brother who was asked: “Is it really true that ignorance and indifference are the greatest threats to the church today? The fellow responded: “I don’t know and I don’t care.”

Satan uses indifference to deceive us. He makes us think that because we are not suffering severe persecutions that he must be leaving us alone. But he can destroy just as effectively by getting us to care about other things more—the backdoor approach. It is not necessary that we be terribly immoral or false teachers. By treating worship as a ritual,

going through a lifeless orthodoxy, we can honor God with our lips while our hearts are far from him, Mt 15:8. “My, how tiresome it is,” Mal 1:13, NASV.

**Symptoms**

The greatest fear we face is that of facing ourselves—individually and congregationally! Though painful, a self-examination can be a good thing. In too many cases and places the growth of Christianity has been stunted in this last quarter of the twentieth century by the plague of complacency. World population will reach 5 billion(!) in the next few months and we are not even “holding our own” in comparison. Some symptoms are:

*Lack of Confidence in the Word.* We rely too much on pop psychology and have lost sight of the fact that the message of the cross is a militant gospel. We have swallowed the philosophy of “never trouble trouble until trouble troubles you.” The “good news” is

aggressive. The citadels of error would not be ignoring us if we were not content to have détente in religion. We are soldiers. Remember? “The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds,” 2 Cor 10:4. Has your sword become dull and rusty from lack of use?

Israel was warned of apathy. “Behold, days are coming, declares the Lord God, when I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, But rather for hearing the words of the Lord. And people will stagger from sea to sea, And from the north even to the east; They will go to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, But they will not find it... Those who say, The calamity will not overtake or confront us,” Amos 8:11,12; 9:10.

*Riches.* “Designer labels” are a must. We are in constant “need” of more luxurious versions of something we already had while much of the world has barely enough to keep body and soul intact. What happens to those who let time slip by, busy buying and getting and thinking of themselves? “Woe to you... who lied on beds of ivory, stretch out on your couches, eat lambs... calves... who anoint yourselves with the best ointments...” Amos 6:1-8.

*Cares.* These often become evident at worship services. Irreverence is not usually intended but is a byproduct of indifference. We just don’t think. Talking, laughing, going in and out of the services in a cavalier manner, is more like being at a ball game than the house of God. Habitual sleeping in worship can be a physical problem. When it is caused by pursuing riches and pleasures to the point that one is not getting enough sleep, it is a spiritual problem. Cares of this world prevent any forethought in preparation for worship.

*Pleasures.* Minds get so cluttered with sports, movies, music, etc., that there is little time or energy for spiritual pursuits. We want our reward now! Being “lovers of pleasure,” 2 Tim 3:4, to the neglect of spiritual matters is evidence that we are lukewarm, unconcerned, and spiritually numb.

*Fussing and Wrangling.* Little time or effort is put forth to evangelize but there is an abundance of time and boundless energy available to carry on a fuss. It is amazing what strong convictions one can muster for some relatively insignificant matter and how little care one can have toward evangelizing the 5 billion(!) lost people in the world. We can argue eyeball to eyeball for our pet “convictions” while never conducting a home Bible study with a lost soul. This is too absurd for words. How could our thinking get so distorted? We have left undone the weightier matter.

*Work of Many Left to a Few.* When a small minority accepts the bulk of responsibility and takes care of most everything that needs tending to, you have a disinterested church.

*Toleration of Error and Immorality.* A brother falls into sin and hardly anyone bothers to see about him. “We know we ought to deal with it, but...” Error is subtly aggressive. It can cause indifference even by being silent, 1 Cor 5. Indifference is contagious and can permeate a congregation almost without being detected.

### The Remedy

“Remember Therefore Whence Thou Art Fallen,” Rev 2:5a. Indifference amounts to falling away, causing one to be lost. If one will look closely at his past life he can see where he went astray. By so doing he can return to the esteem and appreciation for the cause for which he once stood.

“Repent And Do The First Works,” Rev 2:5b. One of the worst ways to treat a person is with indifference. Toward God, it demands repentance. The “first works” refer not to obeying the plan of salvation again but to the good things one was zealous in before his apostasy.

Sometimes a person who senses he has erred may desire to return but doesn’t know how to rekindle that flame of extinguished love. Some think it comes by silent meditation or by a “supernatural zap” that wakes them up and restores that lost zeal. But the wisdom of our Savior says it comes by doing “the first works”—doing what they did in the first and best days of their new life. Read the Bible as they did then. Pray as they did then. Do good to those in need. Help the distressed and fallen. Try to reach a friend with the gospel. As a member of the physical body can become paralyzed through lack of use, it may also be rehabilitated by practice and doing with it what was formerly done. Remember the ardor, the zeal, and the warmth of love which once characterized us—a happy memory. This is the way to have a “faith that works through love,” Gal 5:6.

*Set Goals! Phil 3:13,14.* Reassess your purpose for existence. Check your attitude toward the gospel. Believe it. Live it. Spread it!

*Evangelize, 1 Tim 4:16.* This is not a

cure-all but it takes care of many problems associated with indifference. Jesus, in his originality, could see the possibility of a brotherhood beyond nationalistic lines. Likewise, you can have that “fire in the bones” which Jeremiah, Jesus, Paul and others had when you sense the urgency of the cause. Be fervent, diligent, zealous!

### Conclusion

Jesus said, “I know thy works.” Don’t be tricked into thinking that God is like a man, Psa 50:21—that he is indifferent just because we are. Men can argue over how long a church can go before the Lord removes its candle stick, but there is no argument here. The Scriptures are crystal clear that an indifferent church whose members don’t repent and do the first works will have its candle stick removed, Rev 2:5c. Those indifferent in the New Testament were described as “weak”, “sickly,” “asleep,” “fallen,” “left their first love,” “lukewarm,” etc.

Three things need to be remembered. 1) Remember that indifference can be overcome—“He that overcometh...” Rev 2:7b; 2) Remember the reward for overcoming—“I will give to eat of the tree of life,” Rev 2:7c; 3) Remember that judgment begins at the house of God. “He that hath an ear, let him hear...” Rev 2:7a.

—via “Searching the Scriptures,” Aug 1987 

## Remember in Prayer

**Carolyn Dennis** had a cyst removed in her throat a few days ago, and will be unable to talk for a short while.

Also, don’t forget **Madelene Britnell, Tim and Dot Hice, and Joyce Smith.** 