January 7, 2024

RED OAK CHURCH OF CHRIST

THE GUIDELINE

Psalms 31:3

INDIFFERENTISM

Have you ever wondered why there is so much religious division? I would certainly hope that more than a handful of people would at least investigate this very important matter to some degree. We have found, however, as we go out into the community door knocking, that does not seem to be the case. When we hand out material on the church you read about in the Bible or on how to be saved, we get a smile and a thanks, a frown and a no thanks, or we get the response, "I go to church" or, "We have a church". More often than not, when we inquire as to what this means, we find that the church they are referring to is not found in the Bible. When that is pointed out to them, we get another round of responses such as, "I'm not interested in your church" or, "We're very happy with our church." We strive to show that Jesus never intended for there to be all this division in religion and direct attention to John 17 where the Lord prayed his wonderful prayer for his apostles and the ones who would hear their teachings in the years to come and said, Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. (John 17:20–21) It never ceases to amaze me when this scripture is referenced and folks are asked if it bothers them that they are somehow involved in religious division, and they say, "Not really" or "I have never thought about it." Again, we invite people to study about that and the usual answer is no.

If we were to take a religious poll and ask what people think we can link religious division to in the world today, I shudder to think of the varied answers that would be put forth. Perhaps many of them would be bona fide. I suppose I could make a case for several reasons as well, but as per the title, I would at least like to show one primary reason for this putrid division among religious folk. It is called "Indifferentism." One may ask what in the world that is, and I might be inclined to explain in some pale way that would not help all that much, but I can call on a very good authority to help us learn just what this is when it comes to religion. I have in my possession the Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature. I found the following passage defining this tool of the devil.

Indifferentism (indifferentismus), a word much used by the theologians of Germany to denote (1.) that state of mind which looks upon all religions (e.g. Christianity and Mohammedanism) as alike valuable or valueless in proportion as they agree with natural religion; (2.) That state of mind which, carelessly admitting the truth of Christianity, holds that all discussion as to its doctrines is unimportant... The term is used also to denote that form of infidelity, or semi-infidelity, which holds that man is not responsible for his beliefs. "Gibbon, speaking of the paganism of ancient Rome, says, 'The various modes of worship which prevailed in the Roman world were all considered by the people as equally true, by the philosopher as equally false, and by the magistrate as equally useful."

You see, what we are dealing with in religion is no new phenomenon. It has been around for centuries. My prayer is that people will begin to awake from their deadly stupor and bask in the sunlight of unity and truth.† J.C.

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