

# Grace Notes

## Apatheists

1.10.12



**From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.  
John 6:66**

In his book, *Generation EX-Christian: Why Young Adults Are Leaving the Faith...And How To Bring Them Back*, (I highly recommend the book for people who've had loved ones and/or friends leave the Christian faith) author, Drew Dyck, writes

My friend, Abe, was raised as a Christian, but abandoned his faith during college. [I asked him what happened.] "I don't know what happened," he said with a shrug. "I just left it."

Dyck's book goes hand-in-hand with a *USA Today* article I read over the Christmas holidays entitled, *For Many 'Losing My Religion' Isn't Just a Song: It's Life*. Here's an excerpt:

When Ben Helton signed up for an online dating service, under "religion" he called himself "spiritually apathetic." Sunday mornings, when Bill Dohm turns his eyes toward heaven, he's just checking the weather so he can fly his 1946 Aeronca Champ two-seater plane. Helton, 28, and Dohm, 54, aren't atheists. They simply shrug off God, religion, heaven or the ever-trendy search-for-meaning and/or purpose. Their attitude could be summed up as "So what?" "The real dirty little secret of religiosity in America is that there are so many people for whom spiritual interest...is minimal," says Mark Silk, professor of religion and public life at Trinity College, Hartford, Conn.....Hemant Mehta, who blogs as *The Friendly Atheist*, calls [this category of people] the "apatheists". Mariann Edgar Budde, Episcopal Bishop of Washington D.C., calls them honest....For them, the Almighty is off the radar, like some tiny foreign country they know exists but never think about.

David Kinnaman, President of the Christian research firm, *The Barna Group*, knows that folks like Helton & Dohm represent a growing demographic in North America. The group isn't particularly hostile toward Christianity. In fact, they're nice, everyday folks. It just so happens that, when it comes to God, they just have no interest. Kinnaman describes them this way:

They're uninterested in trying to talk a diverse set of friends into a shared viewpoint in a culture that celebrates an idea that *all* truths are equally valid. Personal experience & personal authority matter most [to them]. Scripture and tradition are quaint, irrelevant, artifacts. Instead of followers of Jesus, they're followers of 5,000 unseen "friends" on Facebook or Twitter. (Ouch)

The British philosopher & writer, G.K. Chesterton, once wrote, "*The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It's been found difficult and left untried.*" That pretty much sums up John 6:66 (cited above), as well as the increasing number of "apatheists" today.

What's the answer? The answer is not a "what," but a "Who." People must see in us the joy of following the great, wild, untamable *Lion of Judah*. May they see the peace only the *Prince of Peace* can offer. And may they know the risen Christ by the love we show to them and to one another.



**Soli Deo Gloria, Nick**