

## What Are Signs That a Church Is Becoming Secular?

<sup>11</sup>For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. <sup>12</sup>It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age" ([Titus 2:11-12](#)).

What does a secular church look like? Would it be easy to find one? Would we know one if we saw one? Then again, maybe you attend a secular church and don't know it. It is certainly possible, but how would you know? How would you recognize a church that is more secular than sacred?

Like any counterfeit, the best way to recognize the secular is to be familiar with the sacred. That is why dedication to God's word is so important. The Christian church focuses on being fed out of God's word and seeks to align itself with what it says. The secular church allows the ways of the world to seep into the beliefs and practices of the Christian church, thereby diluting the truth.

If we find something in the church that is contrary to Scripture but is taught in the secular world, then that church has become, in part, secularized. The more we find from the world in the church, the more that church is secularized.

The following is a list of things that, in my opinion, are examples of secularization in the church. Of course, this list is not exhaustive, nor is it authoritative. It is only my opinion it's... food for thought.

### **1. Teaching that the Bible is not inspired and inerrant**

a. The Bible is the word of God ([2 Tim. 3:16](#)) and is the measure of truth and righteousness. To claim that it is not inspired is to reduce it to the level of the Quran, or the Bhagavad-Gita, or the Book of Mormon, which are mere man-made writings posing as inspired words from God.

b. When the authority of God's word is lost, then man-made doctrines creep in. The authority and inspiration of Scripture is the anchor that keeps the church from drifting into error.

### **2. Using books instead of the Bible in Bible study**

a. It is okay to use books that assist in Bible study, but the Bible should be the central source of spiritual truth, not books about the Bible. If Bible studies are using guidebooks more than the Bible itself, then the Bible has been moved to a secondary position. If Christians are having trouble understanding God's word, then the pastor (or Bible study leader) needs to teach them how to find its truths so they can check all things in Scripture by themselves ([Acts 17:11](#)).

### **3. Teaching that there is more than one way to God besides Jesus**

a. In this world of relativism, it is not popular to claim that Jesus is the only way to be saved. But this is what the Bible says. [John 14:6](#), <sup>6</sup>Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Also, [Acts 4:12](#), "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." There is no other way to be saved. The [Muslims](#), the Buddhists, the Taoists, etc., cannot be saved without Jesus.

#### **4. Being embarrassed to say that Jesus is the only way to salvation**

a. Like the issue above, Jesus is the only way ([John 14:6](#)). Christians should never be ashamed ([Rom. 1:16](#)) to speak the truth of God's saving work in Christ. For some, to be timid and embarrassed means that one's eyes are off of God and on people.

#### **5. Teaching that there is no absolute right and wrong**

a. As mentioned above, moral [relativism](#) is the norm of society. We often hear, "It is true if it is true for you." The Bible tells us that there are moral absolutes independent of what we think is right. [Exodus 20:1-17](#) is a list of the Ten Commandments, which are moral absolutes. The Bible teaches us there is absolute right and wrong. Without moral absolutes, no one can say anything is right or wrong.

#### **6. Being careful to not offend anyone at the expense of biblical truth**

a. Whether or not someone likes what the Bible says does not change the truth of the Bible. We should not be offensive just to be offensive, but we should not be afraid to speak the truth of God when the need arises. The gospel that offends no one is not the gospel of the Bible.

#### **7. Pastors preaching moralism instead of Christ centered messages**

a. Moralistic preaching is preaching that does not focus on the cross of Christ. For example, we do not try and be good because being good is nice. We try and be good because Jesus saved us from our sins and doing what is right glorifies Him. Preaching that is not focused on the cross is not preaching. It is a waste of time.

#### **8. Approving of homosexuality**

a. Homosexuality is being accepted as normal all over the world. It should not be accepted as normal in the Church. Homosexuality is a sin ([1 Cor. 6:9](#)). It is wrong. But this does not mean we are to hate homosexuals. We are to pray for them and their repentance. Homosexuals are not to be pastors or elders in churches.

## **9. Approving of women elders**

a. This one may offend a lot of people, but the Bible teaches that the elder is to be the husband of one wife. This is not merely a cultural norm of the time. It is what the Bible teaches. See [Should women be pastors and elders?](#)

## **10. Not condemning the sins of society**

a. If at all possible and according to wisdom, Christians should not be intimidated by the world when it comes to condemning sin. Sometimes, when Christian pastors condemn a sin in the world, like [abortion](#), they are attacked. Truth is not silenced by complaining voices. We do not answer to them. We answer to God.

## **11. Psychology as an authority on human nature**

a. The Bible tells us that people are sinners by nature, selfish, prideful, and in need of the saving work of God. The Bible tells us what is right and wrong regarding childrearing, criminal behavior, actions, and words. Psychology can give us insights on many things, but if it contradicts God's word, it is wrong. We need to accept the fact that God is the authority on man, not the psychologists.

## **12. Use of politically correct terms of the world from the pulpit where those terms replace biblical values and truths**

a. Is a wife or husband a "partner?" Are Christians who condemn homosexuality "homophobes?" Is it correct to say a woman can kill the baby in her womb and call it "abortion rights" when discussing "reproductive rights?" Is accepting false theologies called "diversity awareness?" If such words and terms become the common vocabulary of the pulpit without qualification and/or explanation, then the preacher is adopting the terms of the world and not of God, and by it he is slowly being seduced by the world.

## **13. Going to church as a social habit**

a. Church is not a social club where politically correct ideas are tried and tested. It is not a place we go to voice our opinions so that others can hear our wisdom. It is the place where we go to learn, to be corrected, to grow, and to encounter God, who is not made after our own image.

## **14. Prayer as a last resort**

a. To seek to accomplish things in life without God, whether it is big or small, is to say we do not need God and to proclaim our independence from Him. To

resort to prayer as a last resort is to exclude God from the beginning of our work and to proclaim our independence from Him. Prayer is the first resort. It is the world that operates without God, not the Christian.

**15. Missionaries not sent out or supported**

a. Missionary efforts needlessly curtailed. If a church cannot support a missionary effort because of legitimate circumstances, that is one thing. But, if it can, and it does not specifically reach out to the world with the gospel, then it is disobeying God's word ([Matt. 28:18-20](#)).

**16. Divorce statistics as common as secular society**

a. What a horrible failure this is that the Christians have the same divorce rate as the unchurched. Undoubtedly, this is due to the secularization of the heart.

**17. Evolution**

a. Either not condemning evolution or not taking a stand on it.

Is your church becoming secular? Are you? If either statement is true, start praying, repent of anything you believe or do that is contrary to Scripture. Start praying for your church and study God's word. Let the Bible be your daily guide.