

7 Signs You Are in a Counterfeit Church

The words “Christianity” and “church” trigger many thoughts in people’s minds. Some of the ways these words are defined contradict or compromise the faith, as described in Jude. Jude 1:3: “Beloved; when I gave all diligence to write to you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write to you, and exhort that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints.”

Reading further in Jude, the source of concern is identified as being ungodly people who have crept in unnoticed (v. 4), those who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit (v. 19). We surmise then that not all who claim to be Christians are regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and that every church is scrutinized and judged by the Lord Jesus Christ (Rev. 2-3).

Beware of churches exhibiting the following:

1. A lack of honor for the holy Scriptures above all else for faith, practice and doctrine

Most Protestant denominations have rejected or watered down 2 Timothy 3:16, which says, “All Scripture is inspired of God.” They believe the Bible was primarily culturally inspired, with only some Scripture remaining true for us to follow today.

2. A lack of belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ

On Easter Sunday 2011, I heard a sermon while driving to church where the preacher stated that as a committed Christian, he did not believe in the resurrection of Christ.

It is a mystery to me how that man became a minister. First Corinthians 15:14 indicates, “If Christ has not been raised,

then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.” Jesus had the power to lay down His life and take it up again, demonstrating His divinity as the Logos made flesh (John 2:19, John 10:18). (Colossians 2:12 and Romans 10:9 teach that God raised Jesus from the dead.) Our Lord’s bodily resurrection is the bedrock of our faith.

3. The rejection of the Divinity of Jesus Christ

John 5:22 indicates that we should honor the Son even as we honor the Father. The Jehovah’s Witnesses, the Mormons and the Church of Christ Scientist teach that Jesus was only a created being and not equal with God. This contradicts what the apostles, John & Paul, wrote about Jesus (John 1:1, John 5:18, Phil. 2:6-8). Churches espousing doctrines that reject the divinity of Christ are sanctuaries of Satan and are not worthy to be called Christian churches.

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4. The church condones alternate forms of marriage and human sexuality

The Protestant Episcopal Church in this country ordains bishops who practice intimate relations outside of the biblical framework. The Anglican church blesses same-sex unions. The Methodist Church is fragmented today because of this issue. A church should only recognize legitimate sexual relations in a marriage between one man and one woman as per Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 19:4-6. The sexually immoral (all sex outside of biblical marriage between one man and one woman), and adulterers, God will judge according to Leviticus 18:22, Leviticus 29 and Hebrews 13:4. Thus, any church that legitimizes a sexual lifestyle or union outside of biblical marriage, ceases to be a true church. Their congregations may do good works for their communities, but they have no biblical

right to be called a Christian church.

5. They teach there are many ways into the kingdom of Heaven

These churches have a Universalist bent and preach that all good people go to heaven. They also believe in many ways in God and that prayer to any god, whether Muslim, Buddhist, etc., results in salvation based on sincerity and good works.

The above despises the clear teaching of Jesus in John 14:6 that He alone is the way to the Father. The apostles preached the same in Acts 4:12. Jesus is the only name under heaven by which we can be saved. Those who teach that the road is broad and all sincere religious people will be able to enter heaven, violate the Old Testament teachings that we should not have any gods before the one true God (Ex. 20:3). Universalism is not the gospel!

6. A church that primarily promotes political and social activism

There are some so-called activist churches where rarely, if ever, is the gospel message of salvation preached; extreme left or right-wing political rants consume their preaching.

All leaders have the right to preach politics from the pulpit, but the primary call of the church is to make disciples of Christ, establish them in the faith, and mature them so they are conformed to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29-30).

There are many important social and political issues with which we constantly grapple. It is critical for us all to maintain a biblical worldview despite current events. If we are not careful, our pulpits will become sounding boards promoting political and social agendas, and we will overlook the feeding of God's flock. (Sound biblical preaching will result in the transformation of lives into righteousness and affect all the areas of life.)

7. Church worship of God as Mother and Father (she-he)

In some church services, hymns refer to God as “Mother” and “She-He .” This contradicts the words of Jesus. John 4:23: “But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship Him.”

There is no mention of “Mother” in reference to God in the Scriptures. (Jesus prayed to the Father in John 17 and taught His disciples to pray this way in Luke 11:2-4). Any church that calls God “Mom” deviates from Scripture due to cultural pressure and most likely will do the same when considering major social issues in the light of scripture. The Church, the Bride of the Lord Jesus Christ, must align itself with His Word. Failure to do so breeds corruption and results in a counterfeit church experience.

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