

8 Clear Signs of a Compromising Church

During the days of Nazi Germany there arose a Confessing Church movement that rose against the German Church movement, which became the religious arm of the Fascist Nazi Socialist movement. Of the 18,000 pastors in Germany during that time (from 1933 to 1945), less than 5,000 were aligned with the Confessing Church. Hence, only a remnant held fast to the biblical position with about half of the churches conforming due to political and societal pressure. Unfortunately, this demonstrates that, when push comes to shove, a large percentage of pastors, churches and so-called Christians will probably bow to pressure and allow the norms of culture to become their credo for Christianity.

We see the same thing today in churches in the USA and beyond. With the accelerated pace of the attack on religious liberty today, there could develop a great divide in the church between confessing churches and compromising churches similar to what happened in Nazi Germany. This will not be a divide based on denominational affiliation but based on the degree of loyalty to biblical fidelity. It is sad but true that more and more believers will be compromising core biblical values and standards rather than be stigmatized or persecuted, and lose influence in society.

In John 12:42-43 we see that many contemporaries of Jesus believed in Him but would not confess Him because they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

The following are contrasts between the confessing church and the compromising church.

1. In the confessing church, Christ is over culture. The compromising church accommodates Christ to culture. The

confessing church believes Jesus is Lord over all creation. Hence, they attempt to reflect Christ in every area of culture. The compromising church has a posture of accommodation. Hence, the Christ they believe in and preach is shaped by the culture they live in.

2. The confessing church holds fast to the Word of God in spite of opposition. The compromising church alters the Word of God because of opposition. Soon in America it is quite possible that it will be illegal to preach from certain passages of the Bible dealing with human sexuality. Because of this, many will alter their theology to fit the culture while the confessing church will preach the Word of God in spite of governmental fines, penalties, lawsuits and even serving time in jail.

3. The confessing church puts the kingdom of God above their culture and ethnicity. The compromising church puts their ethnicity before the kingdom of God. The German Church during the Nazi era put nationalism and their Aryan heritage above the Word of God. Many pastors and believers today view the Scriptures more through the lens of their ethnicity and national heritage than through a proper exegesis of Scripture.

When, and if, our nation officially makes biblical Christianity illegal, we will soon see who will be the confessors and who will be the compromisers. In many ways, practicing biblical Christianity is already illegal when it comes to believers attempting to walk out their faith in the marketplace because private Christian-owned businesses do not have the same level of protection today as do local churches.

4. The confessing church alters their methods of preaching. The compromising church alters the message they preach. While it is wise and biblical for the body of Christ to be relevant to culture regarding the preaching of the gospel, it should never put being relevant above being faithful. The compromising church puts being relevant before biblical

faithfulness. Hence, they not only change the method of preaching but also the message they preach.

5. The confessing church is a remnant in the minority of church and state. The compromising church wants to be in the mainstream of both church and state. The confessing church endures long seasons of feeling like aliens and strangers in their own communities. The compromising church wants to be in the mainstream of culture more than living in the divine flow of God's favor and presence.

6. The confessing church is penalized by the state government. The compromising church is applauded by the state government. While the confessing church is hunted down and ostracized by the humanistic state, the compromising church is celebrated by the far-left radicals and used as a model of how church and state should function together.

7. The confessing church prophetically speaks truth to power. The compromising church conforms to those in power. The confessing church knows that at various seasons in their existence they will not gain a lot of converts and/or experience societal transformation. The best they can do is to maintain a prophetic witness to the cultural elites and surrounding communities. Since the compromising church enjoys the power and prestige the elites grant them, they always conform rather than confront.

8. The confessing church desires the praise of God. The compromising church desires the praise of men. Ultimately at the end of the day it boils down to this: Are we living for the praise of men or the praise of God? If things don't change in the coming days, we will be shocked at how many megachurches, mid-size churches and smaller churches compromise the word of God so they could continue to keep their doors open.

At some point we will all have to stand the ultimate test,

which is whether we desire God more than we love our lives, or whether we love our pleasures, conveniences and material goods more than God. Truly, if we confess Christ before men He will confess us before His Father in heaven, but if we deny Him before men He will deny us before His Father in heaven (Matt. 10:32-33).

Joseph Mattera *is overseeing bishop of Resurrection Church and Christ Covenant Coalition, in Brooklyn, New York.*