8 Contrasts Between the Confessing and 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 confessing churches eventually conforming due to political and societal pressure. Unfortunately, this demonstrates that when push comes to shove, many pastors, churches and so-called Christians will probably bow to pressure and allow the norms of culture to become their credo for Christianity.

Hitler said, “You can do anything you want with pastors, they will submit. They are insignificant little people, submissive as dogs and they will sweat with embarrassment when you talk to them.” (Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy, Eric Metaxas, 180). This sounds like some of the contemporary pastors in Western culture who always acquiesce to cultural “group think.”

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 compromise core biblical values and standards rather than be stigmatized or persecuted, losing

influence in society. We see this in churches in the United States and beyond.

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, it attempts to reflect Christ in every area of culture. The compromising church has a posture of accommodation. Therefore, the Christ they believe in and preach is shaped by the culture it lives in.

2. The confessing church holds fast to God's Word despite opposition. The compromising church alters the Word of God because of opposition. Soon in America, preaching from specific Bible passages dealing with human sexuality may be illegal. Because of this, many will alter their theology to fit the culture, while the confessing church will preach the Word of God despite governmental fines, penalties, lawsuits and even serving time in jail.

3. The confessing church puts the kingdom of God above culture and ethnicity. The compromising church puts its 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 their ethnicity and national heritage than through proper exegesis of scripture. When 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 unlawful when it comes to believers attempting to

walk out of their faith in the marketplace. For instance, many private Christian-owned businesses do not have the same level of protection today as local churches.

4. The confessing church alters its 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, it changes not only the method of preaching but also the message it preaches.

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 its community. The compromising church wants to be in the mainstream 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 humanistic state hunts down and ostracizes the confessing church, 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 its existence, it will not gain a lot of converts or experience societal transformation. The best it can do is to maintain a prophetic witness to the cultural elites and surrounding communities. The compromising church enjoys the power and prestige the elites grant it; it always conforms rather than confront.

8. The confessing church desires the praise of God. The compromising church desires the praise of men. Ultimately, 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 can continue to keep their doors open.

At some point, we will all have to stand the ultimate test: whether we desire God more than we love our lives or our pleasures, conveniences and material goods. 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). {eoa}

Dr. Joseph Mattera *is an internationally-known author, consultant and theologian whose mission is to influence leaders who influence culture. He is the founding pastor of Resurrection Church, and leads several organizations, including The U.S. Coalition of Apostolic Leaders and Christ Covenant Coalition. Dr. Mattera is the author of 13 bestselling books, including his latest* The Purpose, Power, and Process of Prophetic Ministry, *and is renowned for applying Scripture to contemporary culture.*