

BEWARE OF THE CHIEF ENEMY OF THE CHURCH

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What would you say is the chief enemy of the church today? By the church, I am talking about the local church as well as those who make up the Body of Christ, which is every born again Christian. There is one common enemy every local church and every Christian faces every day without fail. Now, certainly, we could rightfully say that our enemy is Satan. That is true! But I believe there is one system that Satan uses more than anything else to oppose the Church. Within that system, everything the Body of Christ faces from a negative perspective is confined. In fact, it could be properly stated that that particular system is one of the roots of all sin in the world today. What is it? In my opinion, the chief enemy of the Church is SECULARISM.

What is SECULARISM? It is interesting, when one consults the dictionary, to note what SECULARISM is, and by definition one can see how very dangerous this system is for the Body of Christ. According to the *Random House Webster's College Dictionary*, SECULARISM is "a system of political or social philosophy that rejects religious faith and worship." It goes on to say that SECULARISM is "the view that public education and other matters of civil policy should be conducted without the influence of religious beliefs." Tied in very closely with SECULARISM is SECULAR HUMANISM, which is "any set of beliefs that promotes human values without specific allusion to religious doctrines." In other words, the whole concept of the "SECULAR PHILOSOPHY" is to say NO TO GOD OR ANY OF HIS VALUES, STANDARDS, OR PRINCIPLES. When that happens, God is put on the back burner and everything goes down hill spiritually from there in a rapid succession.

Now, before I go any further, I want to throw out another word and definition that is tied into SECULARISM, which when understood further shows how dangerous this enemy is, and that is the word SECULAR. By definition, SECULAR means, "pertaining to worldly things or to things not regarded as sacred, or not relating to or concerned with religion." In fact, one definition says that SECULAR means, "that which is opposed to religion."

At this point you may be saying, "What is the issue here?" You may recognize how SECULARISM is at work in the world, which is the reason why godlessness is abounding everywhere in every level of society, but, "why," you may be asking, "is SECULARISM the chief enemy of the Church?"

The answer is very serious. Indeed, we know that since SECULARISM is of the world and against that which is religious, it is a philosophy that is keeping people from coming to Christ or wanting to have any interest in spiritual matters. That is bad, of course. But what makes SECULARISM the chief enemy of the Church, is that every day, it is creeping into the lives of individual Christians and local churches without detection. The result of that is that the entire Christian life style begins to think and function from a worldly, rather than from a biblical point of view. Thus, a very serious condition, that threatens to ruin the effect of Christianity, exists.

I suppose it would be safe to say that SECULARISM is another word for WORLDLINESS. And, certainly we know what the Bible says about the Christian's involvement with the world from passages like Romans 12:1,2; James 4:4; and 1 John 2:15-17. But with that recognition, we must also realize that SECULARISM creeps into the Body of Christ through the thought life, attitudes, and actions of individual believers in an "unaware" fashion and with the result as described in Jude 4, 8, 12, 13, and

16. In other words, SECULARISM does not approach our lives with giant fanfare and with great attention getters or publicity. It just creeps into the corners of our lives without announcement, and if we are not aware of it, or do not recognize it, SECULARISM will take over everything we do personally and in the local church ministry.

Space in this article does not allow for a complete study of the effect of SECULARISM in the Body of Christ. But allow me to share some indicators that may reveal that SECULARISM is at work in your life or ministry.

When reason has replaced faith, SECULARISM has been adopted.

When compromise with sin has replaced separation from sin, SECULARISM has been adopted.

When we attempt to run the local church like a business rather than a faith institution lead by the Holy Spirit, SECULARISM has been adopted.

When we refuse to make missions and ministry a priority in our lives, SECULARISM has been adopted.

When humanistic planning has replaced Spirit-led praying, SECULARISM has been adopted.

When financial giving is more focused toward the material and temporal rather than the eternal, SECULARISM has been adopted.

When our plans focus more on ourselves rather than on the will of God, SECULARISM has been adopted.

When we fail to share Christ rather than witness for Him to others, SECULARISM has been adopted.

When we explain away sin rather than run from sin, SECULARISM has been adopted.

When we turn Sunday, a day for worship and reflection upon God, into another ordinary day, SECULARISM has been adopted.

These are just a few indicators of SECULARISM at work in the lives of Christians and the ministry of local churches. Are they seen in your life? Are they seen in your church or ministry? If so, don't avoid them! Confess them to God and repent of them as sin, because that is exactly what they are. Then, ask God to daily give you a sense of discernment so that you will recognize every time SECULARISM attacks your life and ministry so that you may flee from it and remain faithful to God and His purposes.

God will not bless where SECULARISM rules a life or a ministry. But when SECULARISM is opposed to and separated from, the blessing of God will be abundant. May we all determine to avoid the enemy of SECULARISM in our lives and ministry. May we all apply 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1, and Colossians 2:8 to everything we do regularly. By doing so, we will then be able to WATCH GOD WORK in a strong and mighty way through our lives and ministries for His honor and glory.