

What is a Secular Christian?

by Tony Warren



One of the questions frequently asked is, "What is a Secular Christian?" This term has become both somewhat popular and the definition more ambiguous, as more people are using it in totally different ways. However, the words Secular and Christian are actually contrasting words. That means that such an unholy union would be impossible and illegitimate. The very definition of secular means it's neither sacred, pertaining to, or connected with religion. Thus a secular group would be the opposite of a group that would be bound by any religion or religious leader. It is temporal, the exact reverse of true Christianity. Thus the word cannot in any logical way be joined to the word Christian. It would be like saying there was a white blackness; an up, down; or an in, out. In other words, it makes no sense whatsoever. Nevertheless, in our day there is an ever moving undercurrent of grammatical declension where society has all but devolved to obfuscate and confabulate words in a mindless informality where they become meaningless, in order to support some otherwise unsupportable dogma.

In all honesty, a secular Christian does not actually exist. It's an oxymoron, a nonsensical figure of speech in which two incongruous and contradictory terms are combined. Secular has one meaning and Christian has the complete opposite meaning, so that when one combines them they are dabbling in absurdity. Like saying someone was a unbelieving believer. But just because terms joined together are logically *foolish*, that has never deterred people from doing it. As we've seen time and again, man will do, believe and say, "whatever he wants." That regardless of how ridiculous, irrational or contradictory it might be. As demonstrated in the old adage, "*there is nothing more uncommon than common sense.*" Secularism is based on human wisdom, a self-perceived natural reality and an empirical world view. On the other hand, Christianity is based on divine wisdom, a super-natural reality and a Spiritually led worldview.

1st Corinthians 2:13-14

- "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.
- But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

As for what the proponents of this phrase use it to represent, that depends somewhat on the particular person using it. Because people are called (*and call themselves*) Secular Christians for

many diverse reasons. For example, some claim it's because they follow Christ's teachings, but they do not believe in His resurrection or that He is the Son of God. Others as a sort of national identity to illustrate that they believe their country is a secular nation, but they hold to some of the morals of the Christianity that it was established upon. Some have described themselves as "secular Christians" in the same sense that there are secular Jews. In other words, simply to identify themselves connected to a particular group of people, not as a follower of Christ. Or to simply identify themselves with Christian culture in the same way that some atheists might celebrate Christmas. Or as in the country of England, many National Royalists could care less about royalty, but they love the pageantry, guards, spectacle and processions. Still others take the title Secular Christian because of their particular geography, nativity or social heredity. Or because they politically want to demonstrate they are not Muslim. Some simply to reminisce, because of the nostalgia of having grown up in a church setting. In other words, in typical existentialist secular humanist logic, secular Christians don't use the term in its correct sense to identify themselves as "**followers of Christ**," but they use it as a general moniker or identifier illustrating that they are in some obscure way part of a root group. Much like the word Jewish today has lost its root meaning. It started out as a religious term identifying God's people, but today it can be anything from simply members of the state, to the extreme of being an outright atheist living in Israel. Indeed in today's middle east, Israeli Jews are predominantly secular. Proving that words in our day have become meaningless idioms, defined by the changing social principles and philosophies of the world, rather than their historical meaning. Likewise, teachers that were once sound have been seduced and led away captive by the same type philosophies of men, while they hang onto the title of Christian as some sort of security blanket. It is not unlike those who choose to call themselves Carnal Christians, which actually means being carnal, they are no Christian at all.

Colossians 2:8

- "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

Christians are not to be taken captive of the basic principles or like-elements (rudiments) of the world, but are to be a separate entity, living a very different lifestyle, in a very different environment than that of the world. The difference between Secular and Christian is that secular is natural/carnal, and Christian is supernatural/spiritual. Most self-professed Secular Christians deny the supernatural, the resurrection and miracles, while at the same time professing a superficial belief in God. It clearly is not only a contradiction, but a ludicrous union of very diverse belief systems.

Colossians 2:20

- "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,"

Being dead in Christ from the rudiments of the world means by the death of Christ, we were made free from the basic principles that the world lives under. We are no longer secular and natural but sacred and spiritual. We have been set free from the captivity or bondage that the world toils under, removed and separated from secular ideas, principles and philosophies.

Unfortunately, many Christians today are really not much different from secularists in that they call themselves Christians, but in practice are actually natural humanists. They don't believe the Bible is totally true, they bristle under the notion that they should be under its authority, they

follow secular worldviews, practices and customs, and they ultimately do (and believe) whatever is right in their own eyes. **But**, they still want to be called Christian. The only difference here is, they don't just come right out and declare themselves "Secular Christians," while effectively they demonstrate by their actions they are no different. In reality, we cannot righteously claim Christ as "Lord" and not actually follow Him as our Lord and Master. Because Lord means ruler, the one of whom we are under His authority, His power, and His control. Far too many Christians today are simply not ruled by Christ. Their Lord is actually the flesh, their own will, money, emotions and desire. i.e., they are secular but they want to be called Christian to be justified by God. There wasn't really that much difference in the self-righteous religious people of Christ's day, whose works or fruits gave away their true nature.

Luke 6:44-46

- "For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.
- A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.
- And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

Why call Christ Lord (Master) and refuse to do what your Master says? That was a very good question then, and it's a very good question now, is it not? Lord, by definition, means our master and we are His servants under His control. It means our job is to bow to the authority of His Holy word, not do whatever we want. It means we surrender our own will to do His will. But like Israel before us, many Christians today are predominantly secular in that they have one foot in the world and with the other attempt to stand as a Christian. That stance never works because it is out of equilibrium. But this is the post-modern worldly philosophy that has (in effect) made the church subordinate to secular beliefs, reasoning, mores and politics. In the end, we are merely deluding ourselves about being rich in Christ. Secularization in the church "must" be regarded as a plague, a festering decay of traditional religious concepts and beliefs that (unless repented of), will lead to desolation. We can be either secular or Christian, but not both.

Revelation 3:15-19

- "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.
- So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.
- Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:
- I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.
- As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."

God's word is Hot or cold, it is not lukewarm. We either bring it as it is, or by definition, we are not bringing His word at all. Secularization is the systemic process in the church by which we have drifted farther and farther away from our Christian roots to become neither hot nor cold. Lukewarm is an illustration of something that may be palatable to man, but should not be coming from God's mouth. God's word is Hot and cold, and that's what God intends that we bring "as" His faithful witnesses. That's why we are called messengers, because God's word

"from His mouth" we extend to the people of the world. Revelation 3:15-19 is a warning to God's people not to put our words in His mouth in order that it be comfortable or palatable to others. Which we are seeing so many Christian churches doing in our day. They are self-willed and don't really like Hot or Cold word, so they change the temperature in that they try and make the gospel more accepting to the masses. But then they are serving their own god, and not the God of the Bible.

2nd Kings 17:31-33

- "And the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim.
- So they feared the LORD, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places.
- They feared the LORD, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence."

Likewise, the church today is sacrificing their children to the gods of the nations around them in that they have become so much like the world that one is hard pressed to even tell the difference. They don't train their children up in the way they should go (Proverbs 22:6), instead they in effect let the world train them. They profess to believe God, while they follow the world's sense morality, prosperity, liberty, free will, tolerance of sin and acceptable lifestyles. In a word, they are "secular." This is because they follow the same vain philosophies and rudiments of the world, rather than the principles set forth by Christ. They are bringing up children of God in name only, when they are in practice holding lukewarm doctrines. In tolerating all forms of religious belief and practices (even those that clearly contravene God's written word), they show themselves carnal rather than spiritual. The justifications and rationalizations in the church of disobedience has reached epidemic proportions. They not only tolerate, but justify the secular worldview in everything from divorce and homosexuality, to sexual promiscuity and evolution. But a lukewarm Christian is the same as a secular or carnal Christian. That is an oxymoron and a disgrace. Professed witnesses of Christ coming with words that don't belong in His mouth, are akin to false prophets declaring that the Lord said something that He hasn't said:

Ezekiel 22:28

- "And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord GOD, when the LORD hath not spoken."

Which is why the Lord declares in Revelation that God will spew (vomit) them out of His mouth as a testimony against their "false witness" to what He actually said. It is clear from the context (Revelation 3:16) that they are in the church and bringing a lukewarm (palatable) witness, but that they are not truly Christians. Because they are encouraged to buy of God Gold tried in the fire and white raiment or clothing that they might be clothed. These are the secular "professing" to be Christians in the church. At least we can say that the "Secular Christians" who are outside of the church are up front about what they are (even though contradictory). But what we really have to be wary of is the secularists that are inside the church who deny being secular. What we need to beware of are the wolves in sheep's clothing.

Matthew 7:13-16

- "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to

destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

- Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.
- Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.
- Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

So who is the more dangerous? Professing secular Christians outside of the church, or those hiding their secularism within the church? Because the secularists inside the church chip away at the soft underbelly promoting worldly doctrines, carnality, declension, works, rebellion, homosexuality, authorities of men and signs and wonders. All of which makes a mockery out of the God's ultimate authority and salvation by grace. What we are seeing today is a historical degradation whereby carnal and secular philosophies have overrun our churches and changed historical biblical doctrines and laws, rendering them meaningless and irrelevant. This is the end result of both reactionary emotional liberal and conservative unfaithfulness in theology ruled by feelings rather than the word itself. It results in an obfuscated and worldly, philosophical, secularized, political church that either believes we have no obligation or responsibility to government, biblical law or evangelism, or that we can justify anything and live any way we want regardless of religious dogma or doctrine. Both the call to a return to a religious state and to complete separation of religion from the state are found to be void of any biblical validation. The inconsistency can clearly be seen when we understand that the Christian campaigning for a "secular morality" is in fact another contradiction of terms. The Christian obligation and responsibility is to push for a church or Christian morality, not to make the world or state morally upstanding--which all faithful Christians should know is an impossible task. Christians must know that the world is corrupt and immoral by nature, and it is only when Christ changes men that they become the church and thus moral. To dream of a moral world is to dream in vain.

Psalms 127:1

- "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."

Man is not going to build a moral house, nation, state or secular commonwealth. The rationale for working for a secular, national or country morality is a fruitless undertaking. A coherent Christian view of morality positively requires it be of the church, not the world around it. Since the fall, the world has never been, nor ever will be, moral. The inherent danger for the implied secular christian is that we neglect the truth that a tree is known by its fruits:

James 3:11-12

It should be self evident that there is no such thing as a Secular Christian just as there is no such thing as a moral nation (apart from the church). What agreement have those who oppose religion with those who are religious. What pact is there between heaven with Hell, lawlessness and righteousness, the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of men, secular with Christian? Secular morals in Christianity would bring it to ruin/desolation. Christian morals in secular society would bring them to the church. Therein lies the rub. The church in general isn't the light of the world anymore. The world is darkening the church because one cannot blend these two things together without devastating consequences.

To be secular and have some good ethics is one thing, but to be Christian is a totally different

story. We cannot serve two contrasting rulers. If we follow Christ we cannot be secular, and if we are secular we cannot logically follow Christ. Real faithful Christianity is neither state sponsored, nor is it worldly, political or cultural. The church is not the state, it is a body of people within any state. What has happened is not that the secular is becoming Christian, but that so many Christians are becoming secular. Indeed so many Christians have fallen so far that the apostate church (both liberal and conservative) has become the tool of the new age secularists or an arm of the state. No pun intended, but they are foolish left and right. No, secular Christians aren't the danger, Christians who are secular are.

There is an undeniable and unsavory relation between the professed Christian and the secular and declining church. With its carnal covetousness, worldly indulgences, vanity, morals and worldview, it's getting harder to separate the players without a score-card. I'm not so much concerned with the secularists outside the church as I am with those professing to be Christian within God's body of believers. But with all that said, claiming to be a Secular Christian is about as rational as claiming to be a Republican Democrat. The true faith of Christ separates the Christian from the Secular. No matter how strong the draw of secular humanism around him becomes, the Christian takes up his cross and follows Christ. For being in Christ effectively denies the legitimacy of living with a secular worldview.

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