

Moral Therapeutic Deism

According to modern day sociologist Christian Smith and many of his fellow researchers along with the National Study of Youth and Religion in North Carolina, they were engaged in an extensive research task. They interviewed American teenagers; their results were shocking. They discovered that the Christian faith held and described by the majority of teenagers came down to what Smith and his researchers classified as “Moral Therapeutic Deism.”

Moral Therapeutic Deism consists of the following

1. “A god exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth.”
2. “God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.”
3. “The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about one’s self.”
4. “God does not need to be particularly involved in one’s life except when God is needed to resolve a problem.”
5. “Good people go to heaven when they die.”

Christian Smith has conducted more than 3,000 interviews with American adolescents and overall when it came down to life’s most important questions their answers they received were met with a shrug or a lack of real concern. As Smith had reported in R. Albert Mohler’s article,

” To the extent that the teens we interviewed did manage to articulate what they understood and believed religiously, it became clear that most religious teenagers either do not really comprehend what their own religious traditions say they are supposed to believe, or they do understand it and simply do not care to believe it. Either way, it is apparent that most religiously affiliated U.S. teens are not particularly interested in espousing and upholding the beliefs of their faith traditions, or that their communities of faith are failing in attempts to educate their youth, or both.”

Most U.S. Christians believe that God is the creator at least to some extent or some form of another. The second creed in “God wanting people to be good, nice, and fair reflects a person only concerned about their felt needs. That is wanting God on their own terms and conditions. This is certainly subjective well-being. This moralistic mindset basically says, “Were all good people, just be a little bit better, and everyone will go to heaven when they die, because there all good people.” ISSUE: Is anyone really that good? Isn’t the great sin disbelief and coming short of the glory of God? (Romans 3:23) Along with this thought, this undemanding deity (which is not the God of Holy scripture), is more interested in solving our personal problems. This would make God out to be a cosmic “bell hop”, he is only needed when we need a personal problem resolved, and he just makes me feel better about myself, he is not involved in any deep affairs of my life.

Smith as states, "In most cases the more a young person attends a youth group they will be more inclined to embrace Moral Therapeutic Deism."

The culture is not responsible for this belief system of this tolerant, undemanding God, the Church is- and because the Church is allowing this, it is affecting the culture. Most Americans believe they are Christians, just because they have raised up in Church or have some type of membership or filled out a decision card.

We must not subject our own thoughts of what we think God is like due to our sin nature, we are very inclined to create a fluffy God that is tolerant of my secret sin and is not a God of Judgement. If we strip God of his known attributes then we are guilty of idolatry. God is first Holy, self-existence, eternal, immutable, good, just, wrath, grace, mercy, love, and sovereign. We know this because of diligent study from the objective truth of God, the scriptures (John 17:17).

Conclusion

Christian's responsibility is to prepare the Church to respond to this new religion knowing that it is competing with Biblical Christianity. This research should urge us all the failure/lack of discipleship in Christ's Church. Also, the young generation has not been properly taught the realities and convictions of the historic Biblical Christianity and that we must stand up against this seduced form of paganism. This study has brought a striking awareness that we must implement knowledge of the scriptures within our thought to be able to effectively contend against this with truth and love, in an attitude that honors our Lord Jesus Christ.