

# Christian Ambassador Training

## Knowing Church Culture – Week 9

### Review

- I. Our Sovereign
  - A. How we know about God
  - B. Sola Scriptura
  - C. Character, Attributes, and Will
- II. His Message
 

*Repent and believe the Gospel* is the consistent call of Jesus and his followers.

  - A. The Gospel is Not
  - B. The Gospel Is
- III. Knowing the Culture--Those to whom we are called to serve as ambassadors
  - A. **The Unbelieving World**
    1. *Their Nature -- Fallen humanity - Suppressors of the truth in unrighteousness/dead in sin (Romans 1:18-20; Ephesians 2:1-3)*
    2. *Worldview/Philosophy- Postmodernism - The ~~current~~ most recent incarnation of worldliness (no surprise--Paul warned us 2 Timothy 3:1-7)*
      - Spiritual Warfare--Our battle is primarily fought in the domain of ideas of truth. (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)
    1. **History of Worldly Philosophy and Thought (premodern, modern, post-modern/everything... none of these are Christian worldviews)**
      - *Four Essentials of the Christian Worldview that postmodernists (and post-everything-ists) cannot stomach: Objectivity, Clarity, Authority, and Certainty*
    4. **Culture--Affecting the Church**
      - a. Rejection of the doctrine and theology for "story or narrative"
      - b. Ouija Hermeneutics → Biblical illiteracy
      - c. Rejection of Biblical leadership/authority
      - d. Rejection of Biblical model in \*decision making
    5. **Scaling the Language Barrier**
      - Love -- sentimental, universal, unconditional, me-centered
      - Truth - objective and subjective
      - Faith - Rational trust vs blind leap
      - Humility- Submitting to truth vs denying it
      - Argument , Debate, Rhetoric - Power play or waste of time?
      - Tolerance -*Scripture vs. cowardly niceness*
        - Appropriate intolerance praised (**Revelation 2:2**)
        - Inappropriate tolerance rebuked (false teaching--**Revelation 2:20; 2 Corinthians 11:4**).

- Inappropriate tolerance is rebuked (immorality--1 Corinthians 5:1).
- Inclusiveness –*Inclusiveness and Exclusiveness of the Gospel*

**B. Nominal Christianity --“In name only” --false converts**

1. *Their Nature-- Fallen humanity – Suppressors of the truth in unrighteousness/dead in sin* (Romans 1:18-20; Ephesians 2:1-3)
2. *Their Condition*
  - a. Believing a lie
    - Easy Believism
    - Law Lite
    - Universalism

***Breakout - Believing a Lie***

There is considerable overlap between these false-gospel categories.

- 1) *For each: What is it? Example teachers/movements?*
- 2) *What makes each a false gospel?*

Keeping in mind we are still in the section of the course:

*Knowing those to whom we are sent as ambassadors → Their condition → Believing a Lie*  
 ➤ Moralistic Therapeutic Deism

Al Mohler’s article *Moralistic Therapeutic Deism--The New American Religion*<sup>1</sup> begins this way:

When Christian Smith and his fellow researchers with the *National Study of Youth and Religion* at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill took a close look at the religious beliefs held by American teenagers, they found that the faith held and described by most adolescents came down to something the researchers identified as “Moralistic Therapeutic Deism.” As described by Smith and his team, Moralistic Therapeutic Deism consists of beliefs like these:

1. “A god exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth.”

<sup>1</sup> Access the full article with additional material here: [http://www.munichurch.de/sermons/2010-09-19\\_Moralistic%20Therapeutic%20Deism.pdf](http://www.munichurch.de/sermons/2010-09-19_Moralistic%20Therapeutic%20Deism.pdf)

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 oneself.”
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.”

Then broadens the scope of the problem:

The “Moralistic Therapeutic Deism” that these researchers identify as the most fundamental faith posture and belief system of American teenagers appears, in a larger sense, to reflect the culture as a whole. Clearly, this generalized conception of a belief system is what appears to characterize the beliefs of vast millions of Americans, both young and old.

And he concludes his article with a very sober conclusion:

We now face the challenge of evangelizing a nation that largely considers itself Christian, overwhelmingly believes in some deity, considers itself fervently religious, but has virtually no connection to historic Christianity. Christian Smith and his colleagues have performed an enormous service for the church of the Lord Jesus Christ in identifying Moralistic Therapeutic Deism as the dominant religion of this American age. Our responsibility is to prepare the church to respond to this new religion, understanding that it represents the greatest competitor to biblical Christianity.

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### *Group Discussion--Moralistic Therapeutic Deism*

- 1) *How is MTD related to each of the previous false-gospels you discussed previously?*
  - Easy Believism
  - Law Lite
  - Universalism
- 2) *How is MTD related to today’s #1 idol “Me Only Better” (MOB)?*
- 3) *How is MTD related to the religious/philosophical worldview of post-modernism (post-everythingism)?*
- 4) *What is a faithful Ambassador’s appropriate response to MTD?*

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b. Culpability (1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Peter 2:1-3)

**C. Believers--Those who have put their believing trust in what Jesus Christ has accomplished on the cross on their behalf.**

1. Their Nature
2. Their Condition

***Breakout - Believer or Not?***

When dealing with people in the Christian community, it can be difficult to discern if the person is truly regenerate (really a believer in Jesus Christ).

1. ***What's the difference between judging a behavior or doctrine and judging a person? (Matthew 7:1-5; Luke's version continues ... Luke 6:43-45; Fruit (singular) of the Spirit characterized ... Galatians 5:22)***
2. ***To what extent are faithful ambassadors called to judge? To what end?***
3. ***If we don't know if a person is a believer, how do we know what to say?***

**D. Evangelism--bringing the transcendent message of the Gospel.**

A "bringer of the *evangel* (good news/gospel)." ***Who is the gospel for?***

- What to unbelievers need to hear?
- What do Christians struggling with sin need to hear?
- What do suffering Christians need to hear?
- What do growing/thriving/fruitful Christians need to hear?

Great Commission: **Matthew 28:18-20**

Disciple making is what we have been called to, and evangelism (in the complete sense) is the means by which we are called to do it.

***Wrap Up***

- Continue your training!
- Feedback--***help make these classes better!***
  - to me personally or by email ([tim@objectivegospel.org](mailto:tim@objectivegospel.org))
  - to Ron ([ron@desertspringschurch.org](mailto:ron@desertspringschurch.org)) or any of the other elders