

Matthew McNutt, 12/30/2012

Moral Therapeutic Deism

Moral – good vs. bad

Therapeutic – feels good

Deism – acknowledges distantly a God

It is impersonal, noncommittal, low priority. Don't feel guilty.

Is that what we want to be known for?

Is that what we were meant for?

Christian (few times) vs. Disciple (several hundred times)

Christian is non defined, name created by those outside faith.

Disciple is a student, a clear role that defines what it should look like.

John 15:5-8

5 “Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. 6 Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. 7 But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! 8 When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.

An African Christian described it to me this way: “You Americans think of Christianity as a farm with a fence. Your question is, ‘Are you inside the fence or outside of it?’ We Africans think differently. We think of Christianity as a farm with no fence. Ur question is, ‘Are you heading towards the farm, or away from it?’” The church’s identity is not defined primarily by its edges, but by its center. (page 65)

Pastors/Leaders job description:

Ephesians 4:11-16; Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. 12 Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. 13 This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

14 Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. 15 Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. 16 He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

Sometimes we assume it's the leaders' job to do ministry. NOT.

The Path; a tool for training, discipling, living out what we're all called to do.

Know / Grow / Go

Pursuing discipleship has significant ramifications:

It's what we were designed for.

It impacts the tone of our church.

It impacts our connection to the community.

It sets the direction for the next generation.

As a church, our heart has to reflect the heart of Christ on the next generation:

Matthew 19:14-15

14 But Jesus said, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like these children." 15 And he placed his hands on their heads and blessed them before he left.

Psalm 127:3

3 Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from him.

Matthew 18:6

“If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

National Study of Youth and Religion (read intro on page 3)

“Since the religious and spiritual choices of American teenagers echo, with astonishing clarity, the religious and spiritual choices of the adults who love them, lackadaisical faith is not young people’s issue, but ours.”

Disengaged / Sporadic / Regular / Devoted (8%)

Emulate parents and church

College example – kids dropping out, parents confused.

“We have not invested in their accounts: we ‘teach’ young people baseball, but we ‘expose’ them to faith. We provide coaching and opportunities for youth to develop and improve their pitches and their SAT scores, but we blithely assume that religious identity will happen by osmosis, emerging ‘when youth are ready’ (a confidence we generally lack when it comes to, say, algebra).” P. 15

We need to TEACH faith to them, not just expose them to it.

This is INTIMIDATING. But doable.

Devoted had these in common:

- Attends religious services weekly or more
- Faith is very or extremely important in everyday life
- Feels very or extremely close to God

- Currently involved in a religious youth group
- Prays a few times a week or more
- Reads scripture once or twice a week or more

Pick one and run with it! Then add another, then another.

New year, perfect time to jump into a class, group, make a commitment to increase regularity, begin praying/reading scripture.