

# A Word from Our Preaching Pastor:

Sunday, June 7, 2009

## *America's Dominant Religion*

**The following is taken from an article written by Dr. Gene Edward Veith for *World Magazine* (June 25, 2005). It helps me understand where many are today in their thinking about Christianity.**

Sometimes recognizing a problem requires finding the right words to name it. Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton have coined a phrase that describes perfectly the dominant American religion: *Moralistic Therapeutic Deism*. After interviewing over 3,000 teenagers, these researchers were able to sum up the beliefs of such American young people as follows:

- (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 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.

Even these secular researchers recognized that this creed is a far cry from Christianity, with no place for sin, judgment, salvation, or Christ. Instead, most teenagers believe in a combination of works righteousness, religion as psychological well-being, and a distant non-interfering god. . . .

Ironically, many of these young deists are active in their churches. "Most religious teenagers either do not really comprehend what their own religious traditions say they are supposed to believe," concluded Smith, "or they do understand it and simply do not care to believe it."

Another possibility is that they have learned what their churches are teaching all too well. It is not just teenagers who are moralistic therapeutic deists. This describes the beliefs of many adults too, and even what is taught in many supposedly evangelical churches.

*This morning, as Jesus encounters "the rich, young ruler" in Mark 10, let's watch how He confronts this same false belief with the truth of the Gospel.*

By faith alone, thru His Grace alone,

***Pastor Scott***