

“Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach your paths. Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.” Psalm 25:4,5. (NRSV)

Dear Christian friends,

As I write this article, our Province is in an election campaign, and soon we will know who the next Provincial government will be. I have heard from many of you, as well as many friends, about the cynicism many of us are feeling about our government leadership. I truly admit that in 45 years of voting, this election is the most distasteful one I have participated within. The question that rings through most of our minds is: “Who can I trust and respect as a leader?”

This issue of trust and respect are not simply limited to our provincial government, but it includes municipal and federal governments also. I know it is hard not to merely fall into such deep cynicism that one simply stops participating totally. I have to fight that strong temptation personally. So why this cynicism and despair?

Truly the reflection of the character of our Government leaders is a reflection of the cultural ethic we live within: our predominant religion is Moralistic, Therapeutic, Deism (MTD). Christian theologian Andrew Root writes, “Moralistic Therapeutic Deism (MTD) is a concept that emerged out of the sociological work of Christian Smith and was popularized by practical theologian Kenda Creasy Dean<sup>1</sup>. Smith, in his extensive national study of youth and religion, said that the operative religious constitution of American youth could be characterized by the terms ‘moralistic’ (God wants me to be a good person and not a jerk); ‘therapeutic’ (God or religion should help me feel good); and ‘deism’ (God is a concept to decorate our lives with but not an agent who really does anything).<sup>2</sup> MTD presents Christian faith as a kind of individualized, consumer spirituality”<sup>i</sup>

MTD truly represents the essence of the temptation that the Serpent brought to Eve in the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:4-5). The MTD practitioner makes God in their personal image rather than allowing God to make them in His image. MTD is to put one’s self at the center rather than God/ Christ at the center. Our hope can only come from and remain steadfastly in the LORD God as the Psalmist writes and prays. When we remain centered upon the relationship that God creates and sustains for us, we certainly are in a blessed state. The challenge is not to collapse into that dominating, wayward theology of MTD.

Later this month and in the weeks ahead we will come to know the provincial government we have: whether good or evil! I still will be able to hold these leaders in prayer that the LORD God would be their source of leadership. Our task will be remain steadfastly close to Jesus as the Christ and allow the LORD God to reveal, teach and lead us. This task is for fathers also that their children and grandchildren might know and live in the steadfast truth that Jesus Christ is LORD and Savior.

Proclaim Jesus Christ boldly in word and deed. Live in the ultimate life that God directs us into.

In Christ forever, Pastor Kevin.

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<sup>i</sup> Andrew Root. Faith formation in a secular age: Responding to the Church’s Obsession with Youthfulness. Published by Baker Academic, a division of Baker Publishing Group. Grand Rapids. MI., copyright ©2017. P. xvi.

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<sup>1</sup> Cited in Faith Formation in a secular age: Responding to the Church’s Obsession with Youthfulness. p. xvi. Smith articulates this perspective in his book *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid p. xvi. For more information on the study, see National Study of Youth and Religion, University of Notre Dame, <http://youthandreligion.nd.edu>.