

# Thus Saith God's Word

by Rev. Ted Brooks

**Religion**  
What is religion? We define religion as any person's reliance upon a Pivotal Value in which the person finds essential wholeness as an individual and as a person-in-community. For that person all other values are subordinate to this central value. The pivotal value spoken of in the definition is authentic to the individual though it may not be meaningful to others. The pivotal value may be shared by others. In such cases, we speak of a religious tradition such as Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism. For a person's professed religious commitment to be authentic the person's life must be governed by the religion's pivotal value.

There are those who feel that their denomination of doctrines are better than others and their pivotal values seem to differ greatly and may therefore have great difficulty in understanding one another. An Orthodox Jew who emphasizes (whose pivotal value is) the living of all life in accordance with God's revealed law (the Torah) may find it difficult to understand or sympathize with a Hindu mystic or a Christian Pentecostal for whom an overwhelming sense of the presence of God within is the ultimate goal. Even with the same religious tradition this difficulty may appear. Religion can be found among Secular Humanism which is the most dangerous religion in our country today.

My friend, too long we have been led to believe that our denomination is more authentic than those down the street. We have been against anyone who did not share our kind of belief. In doing so, we have lost the essential wholeness as an individual and as a person-in-community. Something has developed in our midst and it seems we have been moved from our direction and lost sight of that essential wholeness as a person in our community. We said last week that God had given us a choice and that he said to Cain "But thou shalt rule over it." When temptation came upon Cain, he made the wrong choice and killed Abel his brother.

My friend, the most dangerous religion in America is Secular Humanism. Look around you and see the morals. Do you not see the decline in moral values, corruption in politics and business? It seems there is no return and that we have passed the point of no return. Right now all over this country people are making plans for the coming economic crash. What could we have expected when other things crept in and we lost sight of our reliance upon the true God and we inherited "a moral deterioration? Unless we once again make God our pivotal value, America will become a dark age.

Right now we are on the verge of the largest revolution the world has ever seen, the control and shaping of men through genetic engineering and chemical and psychological conditions, and my friend, it looks like American people will accept it because we are already like a runaway express on a downhill grade.

My friend, this war and blowing up of buildings is not about you. It is about God. For a long time now humanism has become the religion which deifies man and dethrones God. Its avowed aim is to replace theism with humanism, which they mean to be temporal rather than spiritual. Secularism is a doctrinal belief that morality is based solely on regard to the temporal well being of mankind to the exclusion of all belief in God, a supreme being or a future eternity. While you have been busy losing sight of your pivotal value, losing sight of your family, we now have a country which is now almost non-theistic and has excluded the basic tenets of theism.

Our churches have come to the point now that human interest and values is more pivotal than God. How did all this happen? Man deifies man collectively and individually.

We can go back to the time when the people came to Sinai. And it was here that the people said to Moses, "All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do." (Exodus 19:8) It was here that the people made a choice. "All that the Lord said, we will do." What God had given them became their religion. It was here that submission, a merging of self, this is our one supreme duty, this is life was established. Here we see biological truth that constant self-restraint is a necessity of existence as much for the strongest as for the weakest. It was here that God gave the Ten Commandments to be kept, knowing when these are not kept or exercised they waste away, man ceases to be man. When we replace the Ten Commandments man can no longer make a right choice. Man becomes lost and can no longer make God his reliance. He can not say I ought not steal or I will not steal. It was here a law was given and only to those who have the power to obey it. The fetters of obligation are meaningless except to bind those who are free. Only those who have power to choose the evil can be commanded to choose the good. Freedom, as a great philosopher declares, is the postulate of morality. That is to say there can be no such thing as duty without it. I ought implies I can.

"Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? Jesus said unto him, what is written in the law? How readest thou?" (St. Luke 10:25-26)

You may not have value on the Old Testament, my friend, but Jesus went back to it, and if Jesus refers back to it, then it means more than an old row of peas. If you want to know what real religion is, here it is: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself." (Verse 27) Jesus was saying, if you want to go to heaven and be able to stand before a Holy God, do this. And make sure that it is authentic and be a person-in-community. This, my friend, is life eternal. Religion, my friend, can come in many forms. You can be a religious person in a business. You can be religious playing golf, any sport that is done on a regular basis. But to be religious with God, you have to do what God says do. "And he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people and they said, all that the Lord said, we will do and be obedient." (Exodus 24:7) My friend, these followers of Moses could never do as they promised. Oh they were religious in their rituals, but they could never do what God said do, from Egypt to Canaan land. Then for over four hundred years God was silent. Then one day God spoke. "A voice which said this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him." (Matthew 17:5) "And as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the children of God." (John 1:12)

Hear ye him said the father, if you are going to have a duty, responsibility, be obedient unto Jesus, the Son. This is pure religion. Love the Son. Hear ye him. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God." This same man whom we owe our reliance upon our most pivotal is Jesus who said "Ye must be born again." You cannot suicide your way into heaven. You must be born again. (John 3:1-7)

This world is filled with religion. It has slipped into the churches among God's people. Now we in order to secure converts, the exalted standard of the Christian faith has been lowered. Now we have the customs, practices, flowing into the church.

We now in America have a profession of religion that has become popular with this world. We now see rulers, politicians, lawyers, doctors, merchants, join the church as a means of securing the respect and confidence of society and advancing their own worldly interest. They seek to cover all their un-righteous transactions under a profession of Christianity. As we look across these lands of ours we see little fulfilling the design of its Lord. We see very little of ye must be born again, but we do see a tide of worldliness and pleasure seeking self denial and self sacrifice for Christ's sake are almost wholly lost.

We now have in many of our churches men and women now in active life when called upon to make a sacrifice or to give or do something for Christ's and if funds are needed, we put on a mock trial, a benefit dinner, car wash, bake sale. Folks are afraid of sacrifice.

The church which we have gone about to build has its pivotal value and I am afraid we have made them essential and we rely upon them to get us an audience with God. This church age has made an attempt to us such things as gift concerts, gift enterprise and raffles, sometimes in aid of religious or charitable objects, but often less worthy purposes, lotteries, prize packages, etc. They are all devices to obtain money without value received. Nothing, my friend, is so demoralizing or intoxicating, particularly to the young, as the acquisition of money or property without labor.

Respectable people engaging in this chance enterprise and easing their conscience with the reflection that the money is to go to a good cause. Do you not see why our children her in Robeson County think selling drugs is a way to make money without labor? My friend, when a person comes to know the Lord Jesus Christ a Lord, all, and I mean all, other ground is sinking ground. All other values which you once held dear to your life are subordinate to Him. The wisdom of God is pure, said St. James. It makes you wonder how those who take the precious name of Christ upon lips defiled by tobacco, those whose breath and person and contaminated by the foul odor and who pollute the air of heaven and force all about them to inhale the poison from them. Had any of the Apostles come in contact with a practice so opposed to the purity of the gospel, would he not have denounced it as earthly, sensual, devilish?

My friend, when Jesus becomes Lord and master of your life, you no longer be a slave of tobacco, claiming the blessing of entire sanctification, talk of hope of a heaven; but God's word plainly declares the there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defiles. (Revelation 21:27)

Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God; and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price, therefore, glorify God in your body and in your Spirit which is God's. (I Corinthians 6:19-20)

My friend, he whose body is the temple of the Holy Ghost will not be enslaved by a pernicious habit. His powers belong to Christ who has bought him with the price of blood. His property is the Lord's. Now do you wish to explain how you can be guiltless in squandering this entrusted capital? It is hard to realize how professed Christians yearly expend an immense sum upon such useless and pernicious indulgences while souls are perishing for the world of life, while god is robbed in tithes and offerings, while they consume upon the altar of destroying lust, more than they give to relieve the poor, for the support

of the gospel. If all who profess to be followers of Christ were truly sanctified, their means instead of being spend for needless and even hurtful indulgences would be turned into the Lord's treasury and Christians would set an example of temperance, self denial and self sacrifice, then they would be the light of the world.

The world is given up to self indulgence. "The lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." Control the masses of the people.

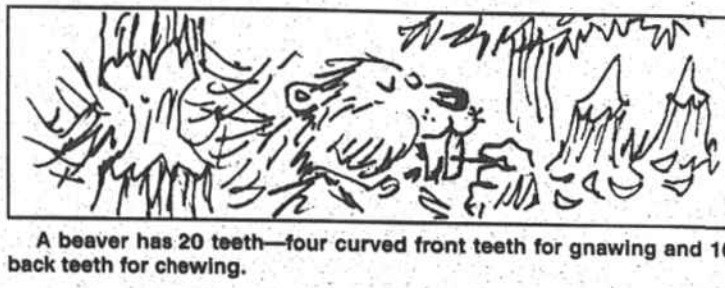
But, we the church have a holier calling. "Come out from among them and be ye separate saith the Lord and touch not the unclean thing." To those who will make this their pivotal value which is above all else, here is your promise, "I will receive you and will be a father unto you and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (II Corinthians 6:17-18)

My friend, it is the privilege and the duty of every Christian to have a rich and abundant experience in the things of God. Jesus declared "I am the light of the world." Jesus said, He that followed me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8:12) What is religion? That which a person finds essential to wholeness. There are many religions but only on Salvation. Jesus, my friend, is worthy of your life. What an honor to serve him, to trust him with my lie, family and friends.

Have you trusted him as Lord? What a joy to have for a friend who will take your shame, burden, guilt and roll them away. "Whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts 10:43) Him God raised up the third day and showed him openly. (Verse 10) And they that were with me saw indeed the light and were afraid, but they heard not the voice of him that spoke to me. (Acts 22:9)

When I was a young boy I remember a song that was often played on the radio. It went something like this: "Praise the Lord, I saw the light. One like a bird in prison I dwelt, no freedom from my sorrow I felt, but Jesus came and listened to me, and praise the Lord I saw the light. I saw the light, I saw the light, no more in darkness, no more in night. Praise the Lord, I saw the light." This light was God's Son, Jesus.

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**HALLOWEEN HINTS**

**Popular Treat That Won't Cause Cavities**

(NAPS)—This Halloween, parents are helping trick-or-treaters avoid ruining their teeth by giving out sticky treats that kids don't eat.

A safe, healthy and fun alternative to candy, that trick-or-treaters will be pleased to get in their goody bags, are stickers and temporary tattoos.

This year, you can even get special Halloween packages of nine stickers or eight tattoos, individually boxed. They come in six popular themes: The Powerpuff Girls, Digimon, Clifford the Big Red Dog, Unicorn, Retro and X-treme Sport designs.

"Parents can dress their kids in reflective clothing, plan their route and equip them with a cell phone, but they still worry about the health effects of all that candy," said Margaret Vergeyle, vice president of marketing for Mello Smello, the company that created the Halloween packs.

The stickers and temporary tattoos were developed in direct response to feedback from parents who were looking for alternatives to candy for Halloween. There is

**A great idea for Halloween is to give away stickers and temporary tattoos instead of candy.**

no need to worry about excess sugar on stickers and tattoos.

"Parents like stickers because it's one less piece of candy for their kids to devour. Kids love stickers—getting and trading them as well as collecting and decorating with them," said Vergeyle.

Mello Smello creates about five million stickers a day. In fact, if placed end to end, the firm's sticker packets would reach halfway to the moon.

Where on Earth can you see these products? The Halloween stickers and tattoos can be found at major retailers nationwide.

You can learn more online at [www.mellosmello.com](http://www.mellosmello.com).

**Successful Psychology**  
Teenagers And Stress

(NAPS)—Stress is a word generally reserved for adults. Yet teens face stress every day, and in different ways. Their coping skills aren't as effective or mature as an adult's, and they're often left wondering what to do about what they are feeling.

**A Taste-Berry Teen's Guide to Managing the Stress and Pressures of Life**

With contributions from teens for teens  
Bettie B. Youngs, Ph.D., Ed.D.  
Jennifer Leigh Youngs  
Authors of the national bestseller  
"Taste-Berry" for 10

**A new book talks openly with teens about the stress they face in daily life.**

In their new book, *A Taste-Berry Teen's Guide to Managing the Stress and Pressures of Life* (Health Communications, Inc., \$12.95), authors Bettie B. Youngs, Ph.D., Ed.D. and Jennifer Leigh Youngs get teens to talk openly about the stress and pressures they face.

The pressures of getting good grades at school, finding a part-time job, getting into a good college, meeting the needs and expectations of parents and teachers, even making and keeping friends are just some of the issues weighing heavily on teens' minds.

The book offers real answers—coping skills to help teens traverse today's stressful times. It provides valuable help for teens feeling overwhelmed with their lives, including:

- what exactly stress is and what it isn't;
- how stress shows itself in behavior and emotions; and
- strategies for minimizing stress and staying cool under pressure.

*A Taste-Berry Teen's Guide to Managing the Stress and Pressures of Life* is available at bookstores, or directly from the publisher by calling (800) 441-5569 or at [www.hci-online.com](http://www.hci-online.com).

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