

# 4-mat review mcminn text book review

[Religion](#), [God](#)



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McMinn, M. R. *Psychology, Theology, and Spirituality in Christian Counseling*. Revised ed. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2011. Print.

## **Summary**

In *Psychology, Theology, and Spirituality in Christian Counseling*, Mark McMinn (2011) presents his view that Christian counseling does not merely involve psychology and theology. He emphasizes that we should not merely consider the interdisciplinary approach in itself, rather the inclusion of spirituality must also be considered. To make Christian counseling an intradisciplinary approach, both the counselor and the client must be involved. McMinn believes that a client cannot become spiritually mature unless the counselor is spiritually mature as well. Before the counselor can share the various disciplines of Christianity, such as prayer, Scripture, sin, redemption, etc., the counselor must personally address them. McMinn (2011) uses a model of healing. McMinn aims to produce a healthy sense of self in which they start feeling a need for God, and this helps them build a healthy relationship with Him and others. Ultimately, once they accept God's

guidance, it results in emotional, mental, and spiritual growth.

Dr. McMinn (2011) believes counselors should use prayers in and outside of counseling sessions, but cautiously. The author understands that it is essential for the counselor to have her own time of prayer. Christian counseling should always be based on the quiet prayer, both in and outside of counseling sessions. On the other hand, counselors can help make clients see God's presence, bring them closer to God, and encourage them to serve and worship him by praying with them. However, there is a downside too. Clients may become overly intimate with the counselor, or may begin depending on the counselor to pray for them at all times instead of praying for themselves.

When referring to Scripture, McMinn (2011) writes that the Christian counselor should determine how to use Scripture properly by depend upon them. They should also consider it as a therapeutic intervention in the model of counseling. How the client will receive it and whether or not the client can relate to its doctrine depends upon the spiritual, mental and emotional health of the client. Counselors may also use Scripture as a tool to assist clients in changing their negative beliefs to positive beliefs.

When writing about sin, McMinn (2011) encourages the counselors to explain the concepts of origin sin and personal sin. This will give credence to the idea that is their misguided choices that are to blame, not others, especially God. The counselors must show the clients that God has a hopeful plan for their life and not a hopeless one. McMinn (2011) states that clients feel relieved when a counselor's response is full of care and not judgmental (165). There are people who tend to regard sin carelessly. The author

believes that the only way to help them acknowledge the seriousness of sin is to show them the requirements of confronting sin and penance.

McMinn (2011) writes that when people forgive, it reflects their insight and a transformation of their character and it is a sign that they are humbly submitting to God, who always forgives us (215). The goal of confession is to produce the required emotional, mental, and spiritual relief by promoting a healthy sense of self, God, and others. McMinn (2011) expresses the importance of understanding redemption for client. Before counselors can share her redemption in Christ with the client, she herself must understand it first. If a client is spiritually lost, the counselor can lead the client to Christ by explaining redemption. In conclusion, McMinn (2011) encourages the counselor to integrate and make use of the disciplines by the grace of God and the Holy Spirit for the sake of her clients and herself.

## **Concrete Response**

Reading McMinn's (2011) book on Christian counseling made me recall many instances where the principles of counseling described in the book seem to be relatable. Although I have never had any formal counseling session before, however, I have attended numerous counseling sessions with local pastors, not just recently but ever since I was young. In the church setting during a counseling session with a pastor, the pastor would almost always start a session with a prayer. However, to me, it appeared to be rather direct, as if the pastor was being trying to fore something upon me, and instead of making me feel more spiritual than I already felt it actually made me feel the opposite. I believe that it is not enough to just carefully consider prayer in the formal counseling session, as McMinn (2011) emphasizes, it is

equally important to consider it outside of formal counseling as well, such as in religious settings. Also, I feel that anyone who converts to Christianity is somewhat like the clients that McMinn discusses in his book. A former pastor counseled me during my earlier counseling sessions. The thing that I despised about him is that, rather than building me up using prayer and asking for God's direction and instruction, he used his prayer to tell me things that I was doing wrong and how I was adding to my own problems. Instead of bringing me closer to the church, the method used by this former pastor almost drove me away from church. I had to make a lot of effort to be vulnerable enough to trust him and share my problems with him. However, I felt that I was going astray from that specific church because of the former pastor's approach to prayer, which felt too judgmental. So, as McMinn (2011) express, prayer is something that we should use correctly and relevantly, but if it is not used correctly, it can become harmful rather than helpful.

## **Reflection**

For Christian counselors, this book can prove to be immensely helpful in guiding their future and teaching them how to successfully implement intra-disciplinary integration. The roadmap that McMinn (2011) provides for the integration of Christian principles into formal therapy is easy to follow and logical. One of the particularly helpful things about the book is how McMinn (2011) emphasizes on how important it is to have solid theological foundations and how essential it is to train in the use of Scripture. The fact that Christians are not theologically and Scripturally literate is one of the main problems in Christianity today. Many people, especially counseling students, depending on their specific denominational traditions just accept

everything they are taught. They do not spend time learning theology and properly expounding or interpreting Scripture. As a result, the version of Christianity today is not intellectually rigid enough; rather it has a more diminished effect. Perhaps that is why there are so many prospects in the context of therapy who are misusing prayer, Scripture, etc. The fact that McMinn encourages that we, especially those involved in Christian counseling, need to be proficient in these areas is not only necessary but is a good way to refresh Christianity itself.

One of the negative aspects of McMinn's (2011) work is that he constantly refers to philosophers whose works advance and further the concept of contemplative spirituality, such as Dallas Willard, Richard Foster, and others. Apparently, as a result contemplative spirituality, experiences and feelings that are above and over the World of God are elevated. The practice also stems from and is rooted in Catholicism and Eastern mysticism and encourages followers to acquire a greater experience of God by emptying their mind. Of course, it may be claimed that this is a fallacious argument; however, it is not wise to encourage practices that stem from and are rooted in sources outside Scripture. Christian Scripture does not support contemplative meditation/spirituality and so Christians should not practice it.

## **Application**

McMinn's book profoundly affects me, especially in how I would handle clients and also how I would handle my own issues. Although the fact that McMinn emphasizes on appropriate theological foundations and proper interpretation of Scripture deserves to be applauded, however, the most important advice I could offer is that it is equally necessary to form sound

spiritual discipline. To those who are facing serious problems in their lives, it is necessary for them that they surrender to God and it is even more important for them to spend some time exclusively devoting themselves to Him. As with any loving relationship, spending time with the significant other is paramount. Similarly, if we want to come closer to God, we need to spend quality time with him, and once we are drawn closer to God, it will enable to deal with the psychological and spiritual problems we are facing more properly. This toughest part of it all is to implement these concepts from McMinn's book. I believe that advising someone what to do is quite easy, but practicing it on ourselves is not always as easy. Therefore, what we need to do is spend time devoting ourselves to God, dedicate ourselves to properly interpreting His Word, and, most importantly, we need to pray regularly as a means of communicating with Him.

## **References**

McMinn, M. R. *Psychology, Theology, and Spirituality in Christian Counseling*. Revised ed. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2011. Print.