

Entwistle book review essay



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David Entwistle's (2010) book, *Integrative approaches to psychology and Christianity: An introduction to worldview issues, philosophical foundations, and models of integration*, opens the reader's eyes to unexpected possibilities, beginning with the often combative regimes of faith and reason using Tertullian's symbolism of Athens as the seat of reason and Jerusalem as the seat of faith; which is the basic ongoing battle between science and religion (Entwistle, 2010).

What Entwistle addresses is his belief that integration of the discipline of psychology and Christianity is possible, each contributing to the whole allowing effective therapy, where the therapist becomes a type of shepherd that invites the client into the goodness of God and introduces Christ as his savior.

Psychology attempts to understand, describe, and diagnose human behavior but Christian theology seeks to understand " what it means to be human" (Entwistle, 2010, p. 3). In the end Entwistle (2010) recurring theme throughout the book is that this integration is possible because " all truth is God's truth" (p. 13). All the reasoning, precise measurements, and descriptives of psychology are possible because of God's work in creation.

Entwistle expands on the concept of worldviews and how each individual interprets everything around them. Each person will search for the truth but it will be biased according to the individual's worldview. To understand these biases it is important for each individual to examine their own presuppositions because these effects the way the person interpret the world and the Bible.

Entwistle (2010) expands on five models for integration: (1) Enemies, (2) Spies, (3) Colonists, (4) Neutral Parties, and (5) Allies. Enemies of integration believe science cannot be in agreement with Christianity. Either they believe that psychology and science holds a prominent place and reject Christianity; or they believe that the Bible holds all relevant information for mental health and reject psychology.

Spies are usually those that have a psychological background but do not specifically embrace Christianity. They are able to see how spirituality and religion can benefit their clients but they do not have these specific beliefs themselves.

They just see it as another skill or tool to use to treat their clients. Colonists see psychology and theology as disciplines that are isolated and both are not seen as devoted to God's will. Instead of seeing psychology and theology as connected entities united through God's work, they " see psychology as a collection of findings and theories that must be filtered through their interpretation of Scripture" (Entwistle, 2010, p. 189).

This model dismisses the importance of the individual's interpretation and worldview; it fails to address the fact that interpretations may be faulty.

Neutral parties, according to Entwistle (2010), keep theology and psychology separate.

They realize both are important but they are not able to integrate them. They see the importance of psychology and they have their beliefs about God but they are like isolated worlds without anyway to connect them.

This compartmentalization leaves them confused and not completely understanding the contribution each can make if they are united into a whole. Allies finally begin to realize that both theology and psychology are united. That God's truth is in the Scriptures and that God's work is found in creation.

Therefore, both psychology and theology ultimately come from God.

Entwistle (2010) tells us that the allies model confirms “ that psychology and theology can shed light on human behavior and that we can find numerous points of overlap between them” (Entwistle, 2010, p. 206). According to Entwistle (2010) each of these models ask different questions and have different answers; they vary in the assumptions they make.

Entwistle (2010) clarifies this when he quotes “ Chesterton's character, Mr. Pond ‘ Once assume the wrong beginning, and you'll not only give the wrong answer, but ask the wrong question’” (p. 206). Our individual presuppositions along with our starting point affects our view of psychology and theology.

As Entwistle (2010) says, decidedly Christian individuals will begin with a “ biblical anthropology that makes certain assumptions about what it means to be human (e. g., created, fallen) and the purpose of human life...” (p. 207).

Concrete Response

As I read Entwistle's book I thought back on my life. I became aware of the change in my world view and how it affected my whole outlook on life. Like Entwistle said the worldview of a person creates all our presuppositions and our biases.

It affects the way we feel about being human and whether we were created by God or a spontaneous accidental life form. Reading the book cleared the fog and allowed me to see how my own worldview changed and God's part in the change. I was not raised in the church. Both of my parents were alcoholics. The world was bleak when I was growing up.

There were lots of family secrets, shame, and guilt. I did not believe there was a God and I felt the Bible was a book of historical fairy tales. I read the Bible out of curiosity but at the time I believed the God of the Old Testament was a hateful vindictive God. I followed my parents into addiction. I began drinking and using drugs at a young age. I had no purpose in life except to get more drugs and to stay high. I believed in science as I was taught in school and that was my reality. I grew up in a sort of spiritual bankruptcy.

I felt humans were just like animals we lived, we died, and that was it. There was no heaven and no hell; we just survived this period of time on earth. We died, we were buried, we rotted, and that was the end. This was my worldview. This was the lens through which I interpreted everything in life.

But things changed. I remember my life became such turmoil that I no longer wanted to continue living it. I realized that I was trapped within my addiction.

I began to believe there had to be more, but what? I began going to Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meetings to try and escape the dead end life I was living. They did not talk about a God but about a Higher Power. I went to these meetings every night for 90 days. The longer I was without drugs the clearer my mind became but my life remained empty. I began to see a therapist and a psychiatrist.

I was told I had major depression and was treated with medication and weekly therapy sessions. The depression improved but again not the emptiness or my bleak outlook on life. An NA friend invited me to her church. I thought it was silly and useless but she was so insistent and I cared for her so I went.

When I walked into the church it was loud and the music pounded from the drums and caught up with my heart. People hugged me and welcomed me as a visitor. Everyone seemed so happy.

I felt warmth in my chest and I felt light like I was floating and even though I did not believe in God when I walked into the church I realized he was there. I felt Him. I felt accepted and loved. That began the change in my worldview. Of course I had to get educated about God's Word and God's truth. I realized my life was chaotic and unmanageable and that even with therapy and medication I needed more. I found purpose in God.

I realized Christ died for all the sins of man, even mine. All the sins I committed when I was using drugs were removed from me. My guilt and shame disappeared. I felt new. I turned my life and my will over to God. I realized as Entwistle said that my earlier presuppositions, my truth, and my bank of knowledge had all been colored by my previous worldview. But now through God I have a purpose.

My relationship with God has matured and I am a tool for God to use as he wills to bring others to Him and help them learn what I learned, that God is great and he is truth. I learned that even though therapy helped me, without God in my life it would have reached a dead end. Spiritual healing in God is <https://assignbuster.com/entwistle-book-review-essay/>

the most important aspect of healing without it all the technical skills of psychology are essentially failures.

What is important is that I came to believe in God as the creator of all truth. This is directly related to all Entwistle tells us about psychology holding part of the puzzle but as sovereign God holds the balance.