

Comparing the Views Christians Take to Psychology

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Why different views?

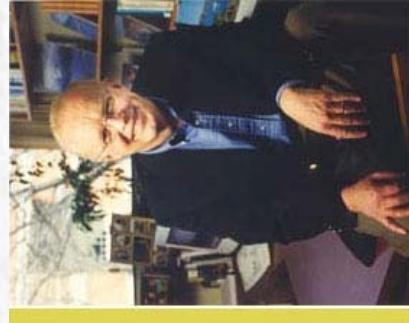
Modern psychology produced a profound scientific account of human beings and developed complex ways of dealing with psychological problems without God

This created a crisis for the Church, that resulted in different understandings of how to resolve it

Levels-of-Explanation Model

- Major representatives

David Myers



Everett
Worthington



Warren
Brown
Malcolm
Jeeves

- Most common position among Christian psych faculty at X'an and secular colleges

Levels-of-Explanation Model



- Humans are best understood in terms of a hierarchy of levels or disciplines that should not be combined
- Therefore, one's theology or faith should not affect the other levels or disciplines. Just do good science.

Integration Model

Major representatives

Bruce Narramore



Mark McMinn



Steve Sandage



Stan Jones

Dominant approach at Christian graduate schools

Integration Model

Common Slogan

“All Truth is God’s Truth”

Key Insight

Christians should integrate psychological truth
with truth from the Christian faith

Limitation

Seems to imply that *all* secular psychology is
true

Integration Model

Comparing Quality of Integration

1. *Strong Integration*

Christian thought makes a real impact

Examples: Jones & Butman, McMinn, Tan, Sandage

2. *Weak Integration*

Christianity makes little to no impact

Examples: No one claims this as their position, but it is more common than SI

Integration Model

Strengths

1. Takes science and research seriously
2. Allows Christian faith to reinterpret psychology
3. Recognizes the role of God's "creation grace" in culture and science
4. Seeks to engage the culture and impact contemporary psychology

Integration Model

Weaknesses

1. Assumes a dualistic separation between biblical research and research on human beings
2. Assumes that contemporary psychology is the only legitimate version of psychology. Ignores role of secularism on modern psychology
3. Minimizes the distorting effects of sin on human understanding = the “Antithesis”
4. Weak integration undermines the lordship of Christ and the impact of redemption (esp. in counseling--examples)

Christian Psychology Model

Major representatives: Classical



Julian of
Norwich



Soren
Kierkegaard



Apostle
Paul



Augustine

Christian Psychology Model

Major representatives: Contemporary



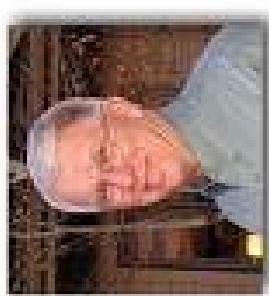
John Coe



Leanne
Payne



Diane
Langberg



Larry
Crabb



Robert
Roberts

Agenda of Christian Psychology

- ↳ The ongoing development of distinctly Christian psychological theory, research, and soul-care practice
- ↳ To provide a Christian *alternative* to modern psychology—where possible—by *beginning with* the psychology of the Bible and the Christian traditions
- ↳ Spiritual formation into the image of Christ is the primary goal of human life
- ↳ Uses distinctly Christian resources to promote healing and development

Christian Psychology Model

Strengths

1. Aims to develop a Christian science of psychology
2. Challenges the domination of secularism over the contemporary field of psychology through participation and engagement

Christian Psychology Model

Weaknesses

1. Focus has tended to be on Christian literature (biblical studies, theology, spirituality, and Christian philosophy, and very little distinctively Christian research has been done thus far
2. Danger of forming a Christian psychology ghetto that doesn't interact and challenge modern psych.

Biblical Counseling Model

Major representatives

Jay Adams



David
Powlison



Heath
Lambert
ACBC

Jeremy
Lelek
ABC



Biblical Counseling Model

Common Slogan

“The Sufficiency of Scripture”

Key Insight

Scripture is all we need for Christian counseling bec/
it is God's soul-care guidebook

Limitation

Seems to imply that the Bible is *scientifically*
sufficient and its content directly addresses *all*
counseling matters comprehensively

Biblical Counseling Model

Major Orientations

1. Traditional BC (Adams, Masters College, ACBC)
 - a. Generally opposed to psychology, licensure, psychotropic medication, and other X'ns
 - b. Tends towards a superficial view of sin and repentance
2. Progressive BC (CCEF, Southern Baptist Sem., ABC)
 - a. More open to psychology, medication, licensure, and other X'ns
 - b. More sophisticated understanding of sin and the importance of relationship

Biblical Counseling Model

Strengths

1. Biblical counseling takes the Bible's role in soul care most seriously
2. Wary of the influences of secular worldview on modern psychology; Against syncretism
3. Strives for a theocentric approach to soul care that sees sin as our worst problem and Christ's work as the cure for the sin-sick soul
4. Puts focus for soul care on the local church

Biblical Counseling Model

Weaknesses

1. Has little explored the relation between creation and redemption, and the relation between God's word in creation and God's word in Scripture
2. Emphasizes "Antithesis" (bet God and world) and its effects on modern psych. so much that it neglects implications of "Creation Grace" and its presence in modern psychology
3. Demonstrates little interest in research and psychological science

Where do we go from here?

We are all brothers and sisters, and each group has something to contribute to the dialogue

There is no *necessary* incompatibility between three of these models—just difference in *calling, focus* and *location in culture*

Integration = Doing research and professional counseling in the public square with Christian integrity

Christian psychology = Doing teaching, research and professional counseling in Christian contexts (churches, counseling centers, colleges and universities) and eventually in a postmodern public square

Biblical Counseling = Practical work in the local church that is Christ-centered and Bible-based