

The New Christian Counselor: A Fresh Biblical And Transformational Approach

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Summary

The New Christian Counselor: A Fresh Biblical and Transformational Approach by Hawkins and Clinton (2015) offers a modern approach to religion and counselling. The book seeks to embolden and equip those who have a spiritual awareness but lack the knowledge and confidence to declare their position on the role of faith in emotional and psychological healing. Based on the proposition that all individuals on earth seek to experience peace, the volume focuses on the Christian approach to therapy and its role in an increasingly troubled society.

The book emphasizes modelling the future by creating new ways in which Christ can play a role in one's life by inviting the Holy Spirit into our lives through prayers and by following the word of God. In simpler words, counselling based on love, living according to God's commandments and being honest to ourselves enables individuals to attain peace of heart and contentment in life.

Essentially, there are two interdependent viewpoints that the authors are pushing through in their piece: professional psychotherapy skills and the word of God. Therapists are recognized for their work in restoring the proper functioning of a client's mind. Similarly, God is recognized for his ability to reward or even punish people on earth. There are certain expectations that God has made for his creation, as noted in the Bible, in the same way that therapists have a prescribed theoretical and scientific view of the proper functioning of the mind.

Although the religious and scientific views are based on very different premises, Hawkins and Clinton (2015) try to marry these two concepts by borrowing from both. The authors employ scientific perspectives to ensure the proper functioning of the human mind and also bring in the spiritual dimension to bring clients to full humanity. The book asserts that although ordinary scientific therapy is capable of restoring the human mind, lasting change only comes from the Holy Spirit. Such Godly change is transformational in nature and has a deeper impact on the lives of individuals.

To drive the point further home, the book employs the case study approach to demonstrate ways in which people take control of the thinking self, the feeling self, the decision-making self, the physical self, and the relational self. This comprehensive plan also shows how the Holy Spirit can intervene in different spheres and levels in life to attain [transformational change](#).

Analysis

The integration approach employed by the authors seeks to marry science and religion. While these two worldviews are inherently different and even oppose one another in some core areas, such as the origins of life, the authors have picked the less contentious issues for integration.

Christ of culture perspective perceives that Christian beliefs are completely and totally assimilated into culture. According to the Unit Slide, these people live in a parallel universe in such a way that they look to assimilate one culture to another without fully assimilating. The slide offers the example of psychologists who get to live in the psychological worldview but predominantly borrow material from the Christian world that has been accused by scientists of failing to account for facts and reality. However, those who prescribe the “Christ of culture” perspective have assimilated Christ to some scientific aspects by incorporating religion and Christian beliefs into their practice. Clinton and Hawkings (2015) have perfected the blending of science and religion in their book by handpicking what they judge to be acceptable in counselling their clients who are facing challenges. Ideally, the book ignores some critical aspects of the Bible that seek to justify any problems that clients may be facing in their lives to the hands of God.

As per their arguments in the book, the authors recognize the existence of psychological issues that are separate from spiritual issues. However, they acknowledge that spiritual issues can be used to address psychological issues, which is the whole point of this discipline. This is because the authors do not practice as preachers of the word of God in the first place but as psychologists who invoke the word of God as a strategy for addressing psychological issues facing their clients.

The authors employ all major psychological and scientific theories in their approach. First of all, these authors are well-trained in psychology and licensed to practice. Thus, they have a good grasp of all the psychological theories developed over the years by all the main contributors in the field. In fact, the authors discuss various psychological theories, such as attachment theory and cognitive theory, as well as the contributions of major theorists such as Sigmund Freud and how their views impact the current spiritual lens in psychology.

Application

Take the case of a young couple facing challenges in upholding their premarital vows. In a modern world where nearly everything in mainstream media is highly sexualized, the young have been under immense temptations. Furthermore, their friends have been taunting them for not engaging in sex despite being in a stable relationship. As a result, the relationship is on the verge of breaking up due to unnecessary pressure. To save the relationship and keep to their Christian vows, the couple seeks counselling on the way forward to gain the mental strength to go through the unfolding events.

The couple’s essential worry at the beginning was just, “Should we do it?” The couple’s non-verbal

communication should offer a more detailed look at the type of relationship that they have and the level of respect between the partners. Before anything else, the counsellor should allow the couple to freely express what issues they are facing and what makes them believe that they need the services of a counsellor. It is very important to keep the client's expectations in check. In some cases, some clients may have too high expectations about what a counselor can help them achieve without realizing that counsellors only act as facilitators and do not make decisions for clients.

As the clients express their issues, counsellors need to be observant and collect data. In such a case, the counsellor should be more acquainted with reading couples and assessing the type of relationship that couples have, as indicated by their body language. The second step would be to recognize and appreciate that the couple had presumed that they were developed enough to go up against the societal obligations of relationships and acknowledge their search for guidance and protection by a Christian counsellor who understands the values of sexual abstinence before marriage.

The other step would be to appreciate and acknowledge their current sufferings. The twentieth century saw a broad disintegration of Christian esteems related to marriage and the family. This has happened with regard to a move far from the prior thought of a "Christian culture" toward present-day secularism. There are numerous verses in the Bible that talk of people undergoing temptations and overcoming them through prayer. In fact, the counsellors should compare the couple's tribulations to the temptations Jesus endured before he was crucified on the cross and resurrected. For others like Joseph and Job, there were many temptations and overcoming them, they were rewarded handsomely.

References

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