

# Ensuring an integral biblical worldview in theological education

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# Defining terms

- What is a worldview?
  - It is one's almost unconscious understanding of the totality of life that causes him to love what he loves, react the way he reacts, and do what he does.
  - "[It is] any ideology, philosophy, theology, movement or religion that provides an overarching approach to understanding God, the world and man's relations to God and the world," (David Noebel, author of Understanding the Times).
  - So, our students have a worldview—whether they know it or not.
- What is a biblical worldview?
  - A biblical worldview is the almost unconscious understanding of the totality of life that is informed and formed by the Bible.

# An average African's worldview

- An African believes in the existence of God and the spirit world, despite the bombardment of the Western atheistic worldview from television, film, music, newspapers, magazines, books, social media, and academia.
- However, he also believes that between God and me there exists at least two impregnable layers of the spirits of my ancestors and the angelic/demonic spirits. So, God is far away...even if he is there.
- He believes that it is vital to be in good books with the ancestral spirits and to be protected from the demonic spirits. Hence, the place of witchdoctors.
- He believes that when bad things happen to you it is because of an attack on you from this layer of spirits. Hence, "The devil is a liar!" phrase, the use of Jesus' blood to protect us, or the popularity of the Nigerian movies.
- This determines how an average African to react as he does to situations and to do what he does. Your student is coming from this background.

# Importance of worldview

- As long as the worldview of our students remains the one just described, all our efforts to bring about a biblical change in their affections and their actions will fail.
- They will write “the right things”, say “the right things”, and even do “the right things” to pass, but their default mode remains unbiblical.
- They will easily lie (especially over money matters), stubbornly marry in an unbiblical way, visit the witchdoctor or “man of God”, despite what you have taught them.
- We graduate such a person and inevitably the church continues to be weak.

# What does the Bible says?

- Jews demand miraculous signs, Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified (1 Cor. 1:21–25).
- Salvation introduces us to a new worldview that undercuts the worldview that we have lived by all our lives (1 Peter 1:14, 18).
- Sadly, you can be saved and still follow a deep-seated worldview that is utterly unbiblical, i.e. syncretism. This hinders spiritual growth (Col. 2:8).
- E.g. Truth does not really matter, as long as you are not caught. This explains why a Bible college student can sign on the dotted line for a scholarship, knowing very well he will not fulfill its conditions, and still feels qualified to be a Christian leader.
- Our task is to be less conformed and be more transformed through a mind renewal (Rom. 12:2).

# We need to integrate this

- This ought to be obvious since it is theological education, but it is not.
- The key is to keep this “mirror” in front of students in all our curricular and extra-curricular activities, through teaching and example.
- Do not only teach what the Bible says but help students to see how we think and how that contradicts what the Bible is saying. Use the “why” question as a “mirror”, e.g. the shame/relationships versus truth issue.
- Let your inner workings come out through your testimonies and let students see the biblical worldview in your life, e.g. servant leadership.
- Cause the inner crisis to force the students to think “outside the box”.
- Use the moments of sinful behaviour to get to the real heart issues that are often worldview issues. They are blind-spots that need to now be seen.

# The example of Jesus

- Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7)
- The Beatitudes.
- You are the light and salt...be different.
- A righteousness exceeding that of the scribes and Pharisees.
- You have heard that it was said...
- What to live for: Ostentation, making money, securing the future.
- Concentrating on the wrongs of others.
- Etc.

# Areas to apply truths to

- A distant God.
- The spirit world (the dead and demons) and its influence on the living.
- The power of the community and elders (“It will not look nice”).
- Deliverance instead of being responsible for sin (and so repenting).
- Truth being functional and not absolute.
- Etc.