
Book Reviews

Book 1

Simon P. Kennedy: *Against Worldview: Reimagining Christian Formation as Growth in Wisdom*

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The concept of worldview is pervasive in modern discourse, yet it remains fraught with challenges, particularly due to its frequent misuse and oversimplification. Many of these problems arise from the wrong use of the term. It has been aligned with a simplistic theoretical notion. Too often it is ill-defined and its definition is nebulous and uncertain. It is time for a rethinking of the term. This is exactly what Kennedy, a research fellow at the University of Queensland in Australia and a non-resident fellow at the Danube Institute in Budapest, aims to do in *Against Worldview*. In this sense then he is not so much against worldview as for reimagining it.

His aim is “to provide a way for Christian educators to consider their practices and goals within worldview terms, but without the problems that are often attached to those terms ... [and] to reframe Christian worldview education from a philosophical, theological, and historical standpoint” (2). Kennedy is right that “Worldview should be a useful concept for Christian education, but it currently isn’t” (4).

Kennedy identifies two main approaches to worldview the deductive and the inductive. He maintains that Kuyper belongs to the first and Bavinck in the second category. I’m not convinced there is such a difference between Kuyper and Bavinck—but that doesn’t detract from the thrust of Kennedy’s argument.

He traces the history of the worldview concept, from its roots in German idealism, through thinkers like Immanuel Kant and Wilhelm Dilthey, and its adoption by James Orr and the popularisation by Kuyper. He provides a helpful critique of the combative use of worldview in apologetics and cultural critique, particularly in contexts of ideological conflict.

A significant contribution of the book is Kennedy's introduction of the "mosaic metaphor" for worldview. Unlike traditional notions of worldview as a static or imposed framework, Kennedy envisions education as a dynamic and participatory process. Just as a mosaic is composed of individual tiles, each representing a piece of wisdom from diverse sources, educators and students collaboratively construct a cohesive and meaningful whole. So then:

Worldview should no longer be viewed as a bureaucratic requirement, nor should the question of being able to teach from a Christian worldview be a problem to be overcome for educators. Worldview is the aim. Worldview is not the means to the end; it is the end. (114)

The book provides an important corrective to the misuse and abuse of the term "worldview". He sees a Christian worldview not as a combative approach, or a term that is a tick box on a list of educational objectives, but rather as the end or goal of Christian education, as a means of growing in practical and spiritual wisdom. Hence, "Christian worldview education is the construction of worldviews by the teaching of wisdom." (Thesis 7)

The book ends with a series of seven theses, which provide an excellent summary of the book's argument.