

This commentary, nonetheless, is a great resource not only for the pastor but for the trained scholar as well. It will remain a major resource for studies in the PE for years to come.

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Naugle, David K. *Worldview: The History of a Concept*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002. xxii + 384 pp.

David K. Naugle, professor of philosophy at Dallas Baptist University, has provided an excellent book covering an area that seems to have been overlooked, for while there are many books dealing with worldviews from different disciplines, there are not many books covering the history of the concept. *Worldview* grew out of a Ph.D. dissertation that Naugle did at the University of Texas, Arlington. The book is lucid and engaging and covers thoroughly the historical development of the concept of worldview in the western world.

Thinking of Christianity in terms of a worldview has been a refreshing development in recent times. It seems self-evident that Christianity presents a theistic interpretation of the universe, thereby shaping our concept of the reality about us. While the term “worldview” only recently came into existence, the concept is much older and may be traceable in the writings of Saint Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and the Reformers.

Naugle has divided his book into eleven chapters. The first chapter deals with a worldview shaped by Protestant Evangelicalism. In this chapter he focuses on the pioneering work of James Orr (1844-1913), Scottish theologian, apologist, minister, and theologian, who in a series of landmark lectures presented at United Presbyterian Theological College, Edinburgh, introduced the concept of a Christian worldview to the English-speaking world. Orr followed this up with some equally significant publications. Significant focus is also given in this first chapter to the work of Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920), founder of the Free University of Amsterdam. Kuyper was a Dutch theologian, journalist, politician, and educator who saw secular modernism and biblical faith as presenting a view of humanity and the universe locked in mortal combat. Secular modernism, he argued, was essentially undermining the foundations of the Christian faith. Other notable modern Christian voices are also reflected on in this chapter.

I wish that Naugle had devoted the first chapter to a treatment of worldview during the biblical era—the times of the OT and NT. Because this is the starting point for the shaping of a Bible-based worldview, a treatment dealing with the view of reality and the universe at the very inception of biblical religion would have laid a stronger foundation for tracing the historical development of the concept.

The second chapter deals with a worldview shaped by Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. The word “worldview” appears less frequently, with fewer books written on the topic in both Catholicism and Orthodoxy. The contribution

to worldview of Pope John Paul II is given major coverage in this chapter. He is described as a “worldviewish pope” (38), and his prolific pen has shaped Roman Catholic thinking about the world more significantly in modern times than any other pope. Eastern Orthodoxy, on the other hand, views life and the world from the perspective of sacrament and liturgy. There seems to be a reticence to discuss and embrace abstract concepts of worldview.

The next few chapters constitute a historical survey. Chapter 3 deals with the history of word studies on *Weltanschauung* (German for “worldview”), the concept in other European languages, and “worldview” in English literature. Chapters 4-6 deal with the history of the development of the concept as a philosophical idea in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and highlight the major contributors. Martin Heidegger’s contribution, for instance, is dealt with at some length. In Heidegger’s analysis, originally provided as a critique of Karl Jaspers’s new “existence philosophy,” he points out that Jaspers based his philosophical formulations about humanity on faulty assumptions. Heidegger argues that philosophy and worldview are the same thing, for philosophy articulates a worldview (134). Thus, in the development of modernism as a philosophical framework, humanity has placed itself at the epicenter of life, providing a radically different way of understanding reality (141).

Chapters 7 and 8 trace the development from the perspective of natural sciences and social sciences. Analyzing Michael Polanyi’s theory of tacit knowledge—a notion that sees epistemology as built on a set of presuppositions that lie just below the “waterline” of conscious awareness—and Thomas Kuhn’s paradigm that all scientific thought and academic endeavor is conditioned by scholarly traditions and an array of intangible historical and human factors (206-7). All these assumptions, Naugle argues, have reshaped the worldview and shifted the understanding of Scripture.

Chapter 9 deals with theological reflections on worldview. Issues of subjectivity and objectivity are dealt with. God provides objective truth in His self-revelation and in all His propositional revelation about the nature of humanity, truth; and the universe. At the same time the *imago Dei* encompasses all human faculties and makes us see reality from a subjective, God-oriented perspective (260-74). Sin and redemption play a part in our view of reality, as does spiritual warfare, which introduces other perspectives of reality.

In chapter 10 Naugle presents philosophical reflections on worldview. Here he posits worldview as a semiotic phenomenon—a network of narrative signs in which humanity sees, understands, and expresses itself and the reality around it. This chapter is more abstract than the preceding ones, and understandably so. Chapter 11 presents concluding reflections on worldview. Naugle summarizes the philosophical, theological and spiritual dangers of worldview, but balances that with affirmations of the benefits of worldview in the philosophical, theological, and spiritual realms.

As a reader from a socio-cultural background that is not Western, I have a sense of being somehow left out. Nothing in the book addresses the concept of

worldview in areas outside Europe and North America. I know that there are other significant worldviews that are shared by major blocks of the world. Much of what is referred to as the “two-thirds world” have a shared view of the world and reality that is somewhat different from the typically Western view. The presence of Christianity in these areas of the world has resulted in the shaping of a worldview that should have a place in the history of the development of the concept. So, in that sense, I feel that there is a missing chapter in Naugle’s book.

David K. Naugle has nevertheless made a very useful and needed contribution to the realm of the history of ideas. His work is readable and at the same time academically stimulating. It is well researched and presents the leading voices in worldview thinking. It makes a most worthwhile addition to the library of both the serious student and the established scholar. It is written from the perspective of a high view of Scripture, and is bound to support the church in its enterprise.

Joel Musvosvi

Sepulveda, Ciro. *Ellen White: The Troubles and Triumphs of an American Prophet*. Huntsville, AL: Oakwood College Press, 2002. 272 pp.

Ciro Sepulveda is the chairman of the History department at Oakwood College. This book is an effort to bring back to life one of the characters in the history of Christianity in the United States. In its twenty-seven chapters, Sepulveda addresses several questions, such as, Who was this American prophet? What was she saying that captured so much attention? and Why was she easily forgotten? Her message inspired thousands and alienated many. Her ideas continue to influence people in all corners of the planet and estrange some, especially those who consider her as less than authentic. Sepulveda observes that, while Ellen White remains a powerful force behind one of the fastest growing religious movements of the twentieth-century, she continues to be mysterious and unknown to the public at large.

Sepulveda not only looks at the contributions of Ellen White and the challenges she encountered, but he places her in the social and historical context that influenced and shaped her life and legacy. He argues that “the traditions and values of New England set the backdrop for the life and times of Ellen White” (15). She was part of nineteenth-century society, which had negative attitudes towards women, attitudes shaped, in part, through the thinking of powerful personalities.

The author not only provides an interesting and insightful story but also reveals vignettes into the religious experiences of the common men and women who shaped the history of the United States. He achieves this through a multifaceted approach: relating captivating stories from Ellen White’s life; forthrightly chronicling the ups and downs of the organizations that consumed much of her time and energy; and outlining the historical nuances of the society in which she lived. One outstanding quality of the book is how it weaves the life of Ellen White