

Abstract

Title - Anthropology Embedded in Worldview Studies: Modernity's Failure and the Response of Christian Philosophy of Life in a Postmodern Age of Expressivism

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This thesis examines two divergent streams of thought in Christian philosophy of life as represented by the works of Francis Schaeffer and James K. A. Smith in an effort to better address the existential needs of the postmodern era. Schaeffer impacted countless Christians in the 1970's and 1980's who were grappling with relativism by recovering truth and affirming the burgeoning concept of worldview studies as an inescapable aspect of life that every individual must come to grips with. In this way, Schaeffer made an important contribution to reclaim historic Christianity from the influence of modernity and Enlightenment thought with biblical ideas dating from the Reformation. James K. A. Smith, who also comes from the Reformed tradition, has made significant contributions in the area of Christian philosophy of life and worldview studies through his work on cultural liturgies of desire, habit, and embodied practices. For Smith, the processes of feeling and desiring are more central to the Christian life than the faculty of reason. The role of reason and reflection, for Smith, is to recognize and redirect practices and desires towards Christ and the Kingdom.

Consequently, Schaeffer and Smith differ largely in the realms of anthropology and the role of reason in being. In an effort to see how these two authors may or may not complement each other effectively, this thesis will analyze each author in turn then explore whether or not the application of Smith's liturgical anthropology can improve the worldview system of thought or necessitates discarding it as a method of Christian philosophy of life. This thesis concludes that it is possible to integrate the work of these two authors and provide a balanced anthropology for worldview studies that equally emphasizes the rational and practical elements of being.