

Naturalism & Biblical Worldview

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Introduction

Worldviews are “systems of belief about fundamental aspects of reality” and that beliefs are “existential, evaluative, or prescriptive beliefs about what exists, what is good, and how people should act” (Holmes et al., 2021). There are seven major worldviews that shape our beliefs about the world and our decisions in this world: Theism, Atheism, Pantheism, Finite Godism, and Polytheism. Each of these worldviews have different characteristics and theories about God, person, world, environment, health, wellbeing, nurse, or care. Naturalism falls under the worldview of Atheism because they do not believe that God exists, but the natural law shapes this world.

Naturalism Worldview

Naturalism is a “view that nature is all there is, with no supernatural powers or beings” (Carrier, 2010). It is a science and evidenced based worldview. Naturalists do not believe that there is a God. “All reality is explained in terms of physical elements, forces and processes and that everything can be explained on the basis of natural law” (Fisher, 2012). Therefore, they believe that God is unnecessary, and humans are highly evolved animals whose purpose in life is self-fulfillment, pleasure, service, and betterment of the next generation. Humans are to live in harmony with nature. Because humans didn’t create themselves, we cannot take credit for who we are. “This insight leads us to become more accepting, compassionate and sympathetic toward ourselves and others, and less likely to harbor feelings of resentment, anger, envy, or contempt” (Clark, 2016). We are not self-caused, but fully caused creatures.

The world to naturalists, is controlled by the laws of nature. Therefore, they care for the environment and do not want to cause any harm to the earth. The world is very sacred to them since it is the world that they live in created by nature, which is the force that they believe in. “...

There is no divinity looking out for us, so the fate of the planet and its life forms depends primarily on us” (Clark, 2016). Humans have the responsibility for their own well-being.

Health is also based on evidence. Naturalists believe in the facts when considering their health. For example, if someone is diagnosed with cancer, naturalists believe that chemotherapy is better than prayers. Naturalists look for available evidence for healing and cure instead of relying on people’s intuitions, hope, prayers, or other faith-based alternatives. They are not very open to different methods of nursing care but rather have a close-minded approach with only an evidenced based approach to nursing care.

Biblical Worldview Comparison

Naturalism differs from the Biblical worldview in many different ways. Christians believe that God is personal and triune. He is the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit who created the world we live in. He is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. Everything is under His control. Even though, humans are created in His image, we are still sinful, so Christ died for our sins and redeems us to restore our relationship with Him. Ephesians 2:8-10, “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” Our health and well-being come from God. He gives us love, joy, peace, rest, security, happiness, and health. Unlike Naturalists, Christians believe in the reality of the spiritual and unseen while also having faith and praying to God. Therefore, it is important that we become like Jesus. 1 Corinthians 11:1, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.” As Christian nurses, we are to provide compassionate care for believers and nonbelievers. We want to provide comfort for those who are suffering and death.

Jesus has a healing power that brings new life to the hopeless and carries our pains. Exodus 15:26, "...for I am the Lord, your healer."

Conclusion

Worldviews can affect clients' health and decision making. Therefore, it is important that nurses are aware of the patient's beliefs and respect his or her worldviews. We need to understand that everyone's view may be different from one another. If we were to encounter a Naturalist, we can listen to their perspective and give them evidence-based treatments to help increase their chances of healing. Encouraging patients to share and communicate their needs to the nurses may benefit both the patient and the nurse. As we respond and communicate with our patients, we show God's grace and reflect His character.

References

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