

The suggestion that we, as observers, create reality for ourselves is an exhilarating idea, but spectacular mathematics does not make it true. Hawking's hypothesis that the laws of physics originated from a natural selection process and "not in a structure of absolutes beyond it" (p. 258) overlooks the logical prerequisite that laws and mathematics to govern such a selection process would have had to originate from somewhere. His final theory, it turns out, is less than final, for it leads to a paradox of endless regress that fails to explain fine tuning but only defers the explanation to other levels.

Furthermore, Hawking's romance with subjectivism invalidates reason itself, including mathematics, on which his cosmology is based, for if physical brain events and their corresponding thoughts are nothing more than artifacts of our subjective observation, then there can be no basis for believing any theory to be a true model of the cosmos. The mathematics of quantum cosmology has not rendered the idea of God unnecessary. Rather, it leads to further questions, such as why quantitative mental models can effectively represent spacetime and make scientific predictions. Why is the universe humanly comprehensible?

Hertog writes that Hawking considered his final theory "to mark the end of my battles with God" (p. 208). Although his purpose in wrestling with God differed from that of Jacob, who sought God's blessing (Gen. 32:22-32), this reviewer wishes for God's blessing on Stephen Hawking and his colleagues, whose scholarship challenges us all to continue to pursue the challenging and ultimately meaningful questions about the universe and our place in it.

Notes

¹Stephen W. Hawking, *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes* (Bantam Books, 1988), 127.

²Stephen W. Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow, *The Grand Design* (Bantam Books, 2010), 140.

³John Archibald Wheeler, "John Archibald Wheeler," in *The Tests of Time: Readings in the Development of Physical Theory*, ed. Lisa M. Dolling, Arthur F. Gianelli, and Glenn N. Statile (Princeton University Press, 2003), 490-91.

Reviewed by William P. Cheshire, professor of neurology at Mayo Clinic, Jacksonville, FL 32224.

PSYCHOLOGY/NEUROSCIENCE

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56315/PSCF6-25Whitney>

THE INTEGRATION JOURNEY: A Student's Guide to Faith, Culture, and Psychology by William B. Whitney and Carissa Dwiwardani. InterVarsity Press, 2024. 227 pages. Paperback; \$30.00. ISBN: 9781514000564.

There is a plethora of books regarding the integration of Christianity and psychology. It is no wonder, then, that one could get either overwhelmed or frankly bored by the repetition of very similar ideas told in seemingly infinitely different ways. But I was pleasantly surprised by this work

by Whitney and Dwiwardani. It contrasts with most earlier works on integration by extending the discussion beyond the theoretical and challenging the reader to consider the process of integration in a more dynamic and expansive way that emphasizes the vital role of cultural context. Though the authors neglect to mention a few others (e.g., David I. Smith¹) who have likewise written about the integral role of culture for Christians' understanding of the world, this book is nevertheless engaging and challenging. It is also understandable despite discussions of the complex interplay between personal, cultural, spiritual, and emotional variables involved in the integration process. The authors intersperse biblical texts throughout the book in a way that flows smoothly with the discussion, treating the relevance of scripture in substantive ways rather than "forcing" a fit. Reflection exercises and questions in each chapter add interest and interactivity. This eight-chapter book is written for students, but I have no doubt that professionals from across different disciplines would also benefit from reading it.

The authors begin by clearly stating that the views they present are meant as a guide, not as a definitive work on integration. This is a refreshing demonstration of intellectual humility, and encouraged me to approach the book with a non-defensive stance. They also make no assumptions about the readers' knowledge of key terms, and thus briefly explain all relevant concepts before moving forward. Importantly, integration involves not only the obvious factors of Christian theology and psychology, but also culture. The interplay of these topics is the main focus of this work. The authors' challenge to the reader to consider the powerful role of one's own cultural identity in professional and everyday life is the most impactful aspect of this book. They note that this cultural self- and other-awareness is not only important, but is *required* of all believers if we seek to love others in our work and personal lives. This is one of the main reasons why I highly recommend this book.

Whitney and Dwiwardani then proceed to discuss how ideas of integration are embedded in the stories we have heard while growing up and those that we inhabit. They emphasize this point throughout the book by seamlessly interweaving their own stories where relevant. One main point is that these stories bias the ways we interpret the world, and thus considering them can help us challenge ourselves to broaden our understanding of the way our Christian faith interacts with our understanding of others and our approaches to integration. While respecting the multitude of stories represented by humans, the authors nevertheless emphasize that the ultimate narrative that should guide our approach to life is that of the Bible. This delicate balancing of respect for others' traditions alongside the universal mandates of scripture to love and seek justice for all is handled well throughout the book. As the authors note repeatedly, it is that love of Christ and others

Book Reviews

that is the guiding principle for all of integration and life. By presenting the familiar Creation, Fall, Redemption, and New Creation/Restoration framework (chap. 3), the authors hold the tension between the brokenness of the human condition and the hope that exists in Christ to be agents of redemption and renewal in our lives. It is that grace, alongside our cooperation, that is key in our efforts to love others in our personal and professional lives.

In subsequent chapters, Whitney and Dwiwardani elaborate on the role of culture in integration by, for example, noting the oft-overlooked point that much of culture is “invisible” (chap. 4) and thus often overlooked or underestimated in its potential effect on our ideas and ways of interacting with the world. Further, our cultural identities and experiences are dynamic and flexible. One example of cultural influence is the assumption of dualism (body and mind) and inherent naturalism so prevalent in Western culture. It would have been helpful for the authors to also discuss the dualism of our cognitive and emotional capacities, and how the separation of these two is an artificial dichotomy characteristic of our culture.

The next chapter discusses the process of transformation when we go beyond mere intellectual knowledge to experiential knowledge. In keeping with their holistic view of humans, the authors emphasize the important role of our emotions in our deeper understanding of social realities. Emotions should not be underestimated or relegated to the role of “obstructing” our knowledge of truth; they are a gift from God that can draw us closer to truth, to one another, and to God.

In chapter 6, Whitney and Dwiwardani discuss “epistemic injustice” and “testimonial injustice.” They challenge readers to consider their own biases in terms of whose stories and ways of understanding and integrating scripture with psychology we prioritize. As with the tone of the whole book, this is presented in an inviting manner, with grace and truth.

The following chapter discusses the vital role of lament in our ongoing journey of transformation and learning about integration. We need to be willing to see injustices, allow ourselves to feel the lament, and yet hold space for hope. We need to “learn to live in the liminal space of lament and restorative hope” (p. 184). As a minor critique, it would have been helpful for the authors to note the work of others (e.g., Soong-Chan Rah²) who also speak of a uniquely Christian lament in response to a broken world. The final chapter comes full circle, returning to the idea that practicing integration requires active participation; it cannot simply be accomplished by simply reading good works on integration. It is a process that involves our whole selves. In keeping with the authors’ intellectual humility, the book does not end with any statement suggesting “now that you know all about integration after having read this book ...” Instead, the authors remind readers to honestly explore

their own stories and cultural embeddedness as they further develop their faith, love for others, and their own integration approaches. The only distracting part of this last section is a brief history of integration, which might have been better placed in the introductory chapter.

In sum, Whitney and Dwiwardani emphasize that crucial to the integration endeavor is the Christian’s desire to live in accordance with the narrative of scripture, which calls us to love God and others. Their views regarding integration of faith, psychology, and life aptly hold the tension between respecting cultural differences and calling us all to aspire to live out the same narrative of scripture. It is a paradox well worth continuing to explore in the integration literature and beyond.

Notes

¹David I. Smith, *Learning from the Stranger: Christian Faith and Cultural Diversity* (Eerdmans, 2009).

²Soong-Chan Rah, *Prophetic Lament: A Call for Justice in Troubled Times* (InterVarsity Press, 2015).

Reviewed by Angela M. Sabates, PhD, professor and chair, Psychological Sciences, Bethel University, St. Paul, MN.

SCIENCE AND FAITH

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56315/PSCF6-25McAvoy>

GOD THE GEOMETER: How Science Supports Faith by Thomas J. McAvoy. Resource Publications, 2024. 180 pages. Paperback; \$23.00. ISBN: 9798385208272.

Thomas McAvoy, a chemical engineering professor for nearly forty years, chose to pursue how science supports faith in the years following the tragic death of his first wife. This left him seeking answers to questions about how God interacts with us and allows suffering. His Roman Catholic faith influences his writing and gives it a distinct style, different from typical Protestant books on science and faith. I appreciate many of McAvoy’s insights. However, his goal of demonstrating that science truly supports Christian beliefs is a bold, wide-scope endeavor that may not be persuasive to every reader, since this concise book briefly summarizes McAvoy’s thoughts on a range of topics: the big bang, fine-tuning of the universe, the solar system, and evolution, with digressions on free will and quantum indeterminacy, natural and moral evil, and miracles.

One expression that McAvoy often uses is the “design imperative,” something his engineering mind has latched onto in reference to the design of something to “perform a specified task (subject to certain solution constraints) optimally.” He repeatedly uses this phrase in his discussions of modern scientific findings and theological views, arguing that God created a physical universe with apparent order and laws that allow for free will. In such a universe, natural evil and thus human suffering will be inevitable. McAvoy