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of Christian faith and academic disciplines

by bringing theologians into conversation with scholars

across the spectrum of faculties

in research universities

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Preview Response

CAN CHAOS WORK FOR GOOD?

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I find Prof. Biggar's "Created Order" enlightening and evocative in relation to my field of New Testament study in the following three areas.

1) Monotheism and Trinitarian theology on the created order of God:

Does the difference between Old Testament monotheism and New Testament trinitarianism affect how we think about created order? More particularly, does it affect our understanding of what kind of community is best aligned with the created order? I'm asking neither about the relationship between OT and NT, nor the relationship between God the Father and God the Son, but the implication that monotheism and trinitarian theology might have for my cross-cultural discernment of the salience and priority of community versus individual relationships with God in a created order.

2) Chaos and the good before and after creation:

Are the good (Genesis 1 "It is good") and the beautiful creative responses to chaos, so much so that chaos is inherent in the created order? If "no", then how does God's freedom resolve the chaos? If "yes", then how does human moral will respond to chaos and evil? The implication of this question can help me in dialogue with a Confucian worldview that does not include a "fall" (Genesis 3). Can chaos work for good, i.e., there are times when chaos and disorder are morally justifiable in a theology of the created order?

3) I find the last paragraph on "academic vocation" helpful. It stimulates me to think of our creaturely responsibility as academics: in the academic life can a liturgy of confession (e.g., seeing weaknesses in our scholarship and vocation), reception (e.g., Christian faith or theology that informs and clarifies our non-theological fields' enquiries), practicing the virtues or fruits of the Spirit (e.g., in cross-disciplinary complementarity as we receive gifts and graces from other fields), acting in obedience (i.e., discerning and obeying the rules of the created order, including justice and charity), and communal edification of pursuing

truth all be reflections of the created order? I will want to expand this section in my longer response later.

I appreciate the opportunity for dialogue and clarification, as I spell out the potential implications in my field on this topic.

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