Global Faculty Initiative

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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

worldwide.

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Preview Response

ORDER IS A CONDITION OF FREEDOM, NOT ITS ENEMY

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How are we to conceive and articulate the relation between the attributes of God and the attributes of creation? Biggar observes that biblical tradition affirms the oneness of God which is to say first, that 'there is one good God unrivalled by any evil opponent', and second, that 'God is internally coherent or rational'. He continues: 'That is to say, the created order reflects the coherence, the rationality, the beauty, the order of the Creator (Gen 1:3 7).' The locution, 'That is to say…' implies that the two claims are equivalent but that is not obvious to me. The suggestion that 'the created order reflects the coherence, the rationality, the beauty, the order of the Creator' may be true, but it asserts something additional to the claim that God is both good and internally coherent or rational. It is important to note this in order to maintain the otherness of creation. Any attributes of God that are communicated to the creation are communicated by grace rather than necessity. Biggar's further affirmation that 'the world is basically and constantly ordered and so, in principle, intelligible by human minds or "rational"' is, of course, vitally important and its implications are far-reaching.

The claim that '[Moral] order need not be at odds with freedom' needs to be stressed, especially within the individualistically inclined culture of Western modernity (and postmodernity). Order of the kind established by God in creation, i.e., that order which serves the well-being of the creature, is in fact a condition of freedom, whereas the absence of such order is a threat to freedom.

Biggar's observations about the academic vocation, Christianly conceived, are very welcome indeed.

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