

Global Faculty Initiative

The Faculty Initiative

seeks to promote the integration

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

CREATED ORDER / LAW & SOCIAL SCIENCES

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I am most grateful to Prof Biggar for this lucid and compact Preview on God's created physical and moral orders, especially insofar as it touches on law, politics and society—the nexus of my own research and writing. I have four questions.

1. A question arises from my research on the rise and fall of transnational legal orders, those norms and standards and laws that seek to order economic and social and political relations within states and across national borders worldwide. It is a wonderful assurance to have full confidence in an objective, pre-existing, created moral order that is inherently good. Could Prof Biggar elaborate how one bridges the gap between the ideals of the "created, given, natural and objective moral order" (indeed, how one discovers these) and the moral and theological judgments I can make about the rules for the world contained in international economic law or international humanitarian or criminal law?

2. For those of us who study and participate in global settings where delegates from different world religions or diverse ideological beliefs come into the same chamber to draft laws for the world, is a benefit of reasoning from created order a way of getting to consensus that would otherwise be rejected if Christian lawmakers reasoned explicitly from biblical revelation?

3. Is order inherently a good? Are there not occasions when an element of disorder, for example in domestic politics or in business failure, might provide an opening for a renewal of social order? Disorder thereby becomes a periodic moment in societies where a prevailing order (e.g., a corrupt Babylonian or Roman Empire, or a totalitarian state, or an exploitative economy) can and should be dismantled and reconstructed?

4. To take the question above one step further, when Prof Biggar speaks of “morally justified rebellion” would he broaden this notion of revolt from political orders to also embrace economic, or social, or legal orders? For instance, might rebellion against an unjust command or capitalist economy be morally justified by a theology of the created order?

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