

The Good Creation

Chapter 5

The Good Creation

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Ecological Crisis as Challenge to Christian Faith

80-84

- P Traditional understandings of doctrine of creation placed humankind at summit of creation
 - ▶ Emphasis usually put upon human “dominion” over rest of creation
- P Lynn White’s “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis” found the traditional formulation to be a major reason for ecological crisis

Ecological Crisis as Challenge to Christian Faith 2

Roots of Ecological Crisis

- P Doctrine of dominion was understood as justifying instrumental view of nature
 - ▶ Nature only has value insofar as it serves human interests – “anthropocentrism”
- P Cruelty to animals, for example, is only a problem if it encourages cruelty to humans
- P No inherent value in non-human world
- P “Dominion” became associated with other hierarchies:
 - ▶ Men over women
 - ▶ Mind & spirit over body
 - ▶ White over non-white

Roots of Ecological Crisis

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Dominion Is Not Domination

Biblical View

- P Each thing made prior to humankind was pronounced by God as good
- P Dominion means to take care of creation not dominate and exploit it
 - ▶ In Gen. 2, Adam is told “to till the garden and keep it”
- P Throughout scripture, all creation is called upon to praise the creator, not just humans
 - ▶ Romans 8 says all creation awaits God’s salvation, and even humans!
 - ▶ Alienation from God has led to exploitation of nature, so both nature and humanity need to be redeemed

Dominion Is Not Domination

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Migliore's Doctrine of Creation

84-91

P First, to call world "creation" signifies God as "creator" who is radically other, transcendent, and lord of all

- ▶ "ontological" difference between God and world
 - *Ex nihilo*
- ▶ However, creation is "necessary" inasmuch as God necessarily is gracious love that wills to be in community
 - God's *kenosis* in creation

Migliore's Doctrine of Creation

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Migliore's Doctrine of Creation (cont.)

P Second, all things are radically dependent upon God

- ▶ Because of God's self-giving, creative nature, there is something rather than nothing
- ▶ All creatures live on edge of non-being

P Third, creation is good, even though finite, dependent, and limited

- ▶ This does not preclude reality of sin and brokenness
- ▶ This does preclude Manichean dualism of good and evil
- ▶ Rejects "anthropocentrism"

Migliore's Doctrine of Creation (cont.)

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Migliore's Doctrine of Creation (cont.)

P Fourth, all created beings are interdependent and meant to coexist

- ▶ "The world was created by God not as an assemblage of solitary units but for life together . . . reflects God's own eternal life in triune community" (90)

P Fifth, God as creator is purposive and has created a purposeful world

- ▶ God is telos or goal of all creation
- ▶ Sabbath is reminder that we find our rest or completion in God

Migliore's Doctrine of Creation (cont.)

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Models of Creation

Traditional Models

P Theism

P Pantheism

P Panentheism

Models of Creation

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Go Over pp. 92-93

Go Over pp. 92-93

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Creation and Modern Science

95-98

P Stories of Genesis 1 & 2 are not scientific descriptions, but “poetic, doxological declarations of faith in God” (95)

P Evolutionary theory is not inconsistent with doctrine of creation

P Mutual influence between science and religion

- That world is capable of being understood, is a whole (universe), etc., are assumptions (faith statements) of science
- That God created through subtle, complex, evolving processes bespeaks God’s majesty and all-inclusiveness

Creation and Modern Science

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