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## The Point 主題拆局

### 創造召命

*In nothing has the church so lost her hold on reality as in her failure to understand and respect the secular vocation. The church's approach to an intelligent carpenter is usually confined to exhorting him not to be drunk and disorderly in his leisure hours, and to come to church on Sundays. What the church should be telling him is this: that the very first demand that his religion makes upon him is that he should make good tables.*

Dorothy Sayers (1893-1957)

我們容易以個人倫理和宗教生活（或職場宣教），混淆工作的目的和職场的要求，其中一個主要原因，是由於我們的信仰缺少了創造神學的內容和視野。

基督徒在工作或職場上最重要的任務，誠如范涵教授（Terrence E. Fretheim）於其專文 *God Created the World Good, Not Perfect* 所言，就是照著上帝創造的目的和心意，與祂同工，維持並管理被造世界的秩序（order），<sup>1</sup>為人類萬物創造價值（value），致力不斷締造出一個更美好的世界。這「創造召命」（creation mandate），是基督徒最重要的職場使命及見證。

<sup>1</sup> 根據楊錫鏘牧師的見解，人該履行並負有責任的秩序分為功能秩序（functional order）與道德秩序（moral order）。至於物質秩序（physical order），牽涉人生的福禍際遇，份屬創造主的主權，人無可置喙。

因此，Dorothy Sayers 認為一個基督徒木匠首要的信仰責任，就是製造出好的傢俱；因為他這樣做，為木頭也為用家創造了價值。

照此，醫生救助傷病；廣告人創作廣告宣傳有用的產品服務；教師傳道、授業、解惑，培育學生的品性才智；保險中介人瞭解客戶需要，銷售適合的保險產品；速遞員準時準確送遞文件到客戶手上，家庭主婦悉心照顧家庭等等，縱使工作者本身並不察覺，這些工作皆是與上帝共同創造的工夫。教會需要教導和牧養信徒，使他們意識到自己的工作，不論有否報酬，不論能否傳福音，都與信仰有密切的關係。在此方面，創造神學比救贖神學更為直接。

「創造召命」不僅是上帝對信徒的呼召，也是創造主給全人類的責任。無論人認識上帝與否，只要是亞當的子孫，就都服膺在上帝的創造及其法則（創造神學）底下。在職場中追求美善、秩序和價值，不只是信徒的責任，也是所有人的應有之義。由此，創造神學比救贖神學更具普及性，它為我們與不同信仰人士在職場與公共領域上的對話合作，提供了神學內容和基礎。

不但如此，創造神學也是我們信仰與人生的基石，只可惜教會的傳統信仰側重救贖神學，忽略創造神學，忘記了救贖是為了成全創造，也使救贖神學失去座標，幾近淪為個人靈魂的救贖。今期 *A Creation Faith-based Marketplace Manifesto* 一文，大膽嘗試以創造神學重新詮釋並演繹基督教的傳統信仰，相信更能完整地承載我們的信仰與人生。看罷歡迎來郵討論指正。

# GOD CREATED THE WORLD GOOD, NOT PERFECT

■ Terence E. Fretheim

The most basic statement of Genesis 1-2 regarding created beings is that they are “good” and “very good.” What does it mean to be “*evaluated*” good by God? At the least, it means that God is not done with the creatures once they are brought into being. God experiences what has been created, is affected by what is seen, and gives an evaluation. And what does it mean to be evaluated as “*good*”? The word “good” carries the sense of being correspondent to God’s intention, including elements of beauty, purposefulness, and praiseworthiness. God observes continuity between God’s intention and the creational result.

At the same time, “good” does not mean static or perfect. “Perfect” means something like “without fault, defect, or inadequacy, or in no need of improvement or development to be what it truly is.” Several clues in the text demonstrate that “perfect” is not the appropriate way to assess the creational situation. For one, if the creation were perfect, how could anything go wrong, such as is reported in the chapters that follow? But the clearest evidence for this claim is God’s command to “subdue” the earth (1:28).

I suggest the best sense for the verb is “to bring order out of continuing disorder.” The command to “subdue” assumes that the earth is not fully developed; there is no once-for-all givenness to the creation at the end of the seventh day. The command is given in the service of developing God’s creation toward its fullest possible potential. God’s creation is a dynamic reality, it is going somewhere; it is a long term project, ever in the process of becoming. For human beings to subdue the earth means that over time the creation would look quite different than it did on the seventh day.

Genesis does not present the creation as “a finished product,” handed over to the creatures to keep exactly as it was originally created. Indeed, for the creation to stay just as God originally created would be a failure of the divine design. From God’s perspective, the earth needs work; development and change are what God intends for it, and God enlists human beings to that end.

God did not exhaust the divine creativity in the first week of the world; God continues to create and works with creatures in a vocation that involves the becoming of creation. Certain constants are in place: seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night (Gen 8:22). But beyond that, the future of the creation is understood to be open-ended and creaturely decisions count with respect to the shape of that future.

While creatures are deeply dependent upon God for their creation and life, God has chosen to establish an *interdependent* relationship with creatures with respect to both originating creation and continuing creation. God’s approach to creation is communal and relational, and, in the wake of God’s initiating activity, God works from within the world rather than on the world from without. God’s word in creation is often a communicating with others, rather than a top-down word. The actions of humans and other creatures make a difference with respect to the future of the creation; indeed, they make a difference with respect to *God’s* future with creation.

Four types of textual evidence may assist us in reflecting on this angle of vision.

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### **1. God’s use of already existing matter in creating**

I begin by noting the role of the spirit/wind/breath of God in Gen. 1:2 (the ambiguity should be retained). The Spirit works with already existing matter; in fact, much of what is created in the balance of Genesis 1 is created out of material already present in Gen 1:2. Out of the mess of the chaos of Gen. 1:2 comes the orderliness of 1:3-31—though not without continuing disorder.

Eugene Peterson speaks of “the mess of creativity”: “I can never be involved in creativity except by entering the mess. Mess is the precondition of creativity” (*Under the Unpredictable Plant*, p. 63). To be a creator entails an almost infinite tolerance of messiness. For some disorder to persist beyond God’s originating creative activity is necessary for the proper development of the creation. Sibley Towner puts it well (*Genesis*, p. 21), “If there were no freedom in the creation, no touches of disorder, no open ends, then moral choice, creativity, and excellence could not arise.” The mess of creativity is necessary rather than a meticulous blueprint (an all too common image). God gives to creation the continuing capacity not only to be itself, to be what it was created to be, but also to develop into something more. The Spirit, working in and through existing matter and other creatures enables becoming, indeed, enables genuine novelty to emerge (see Ps 104:30).

This theme of God’s creating in and through existing messy matter continues in Genesis 2, where God assumes human form and comes incredibly close in the creative process in molding the human being out of the dirt. God gets down on the ground, gathers and shapes the dust into a human being, getting dirt under the divine fingernails. The ground (*‘adamah*, a play on *‘adam*) proves to be a crucial ingredient for the creation of the human. Human beings are not created “out of nothing,” but out of the ground, an already existent creature, a creature that has creative capacities (1:11-13, 20, 24). The common notion that the Creator is completely external to the creation in the creative process is not present here. God is imaged as a Potter, who molds a human being (and animals, Gen 2:19) out of the dust of the earth.

Moreover, God is imaged in this text as a surgeon; God puts Adam to sleep, removes a part of his body and creates a woman. A bloody process indeed! Creation is messy!

God is creating from *within* creation, not from without. God is bringing new creatures into being with the help of already existing creatures. God could have simply spoken a word and “poof”, a new creature would have been brought into existence. But that is not God’s way in this text.

### **2. God invites already existing creatures to bring about new creations**

Already in Genesis 1, God calls upon the nonhuman creatures to bring about further acts of creating. For example, in Genesis 1:11-13 God invites, “Let the earth bring forth,” and, we are told, “the earth brought forth.” The earth is the subject of the creating verb. And then on days 5 and 6, God calls the waters and the earth to bring forth further creatures. In these cases, God is the subject of the creating verb that follows, but given the pattern established by 1:11-13 this formulation does not take away from the co-participation of the waters and the earth in those acts of creation.

In Genesis 1 God speaks *with* already existing creatures and involves them in creative activity. This is mediated rather than immediate creation; it is creation from within

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# THE **FUTURE** IS PARTLY SETTLED AND **PARTLY UNSETTLED.** IT IS PARTLY SETTLED, YES: THERE WILL BE A **NEW HEAVEN** AND A **NEW EARTH.**

rather than creation from without. God's creating here is not presented as a unilateral act; it is multilateral. God chooses interdependence rather than independence.

### ***3. God invites the divine council to participate in creation***

We move to Genesis 1:26, "Let us make humankind in our image". A remarkable majority of scholars understand this plural in terms of the divine council, the heavenly assembly that engages the deity and does the divine bidding. (Israel understands that God is by nature a social being, functioning within a divine community that is rich and complex.) In addressing the divine assembly, God once again chooses to create humankind, not independently, but with creatures who are not God.

The introduction of readers to a divine community at precisely the point of the creation of the human community is especially to be noted. The creation of the human community is thereby shown to be the result of a dialogical act rather than a monological move (which is a frequent way in which scholars present creation in Genesis 1). God certainly takes the initiative and extends the invitation to the divine council, but their participation is not understood to be perfunctory or minimalist.

### ***4. God involves the human in still further acts of creation***

Inasmuch as human beings are created in the image of a Creator God, they themselves must be understood as beings that have creative capacities. I look briefly at several texts from this angle of vision.

(1) Gen. 1:28: be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, have dominion, subdue the earth. These initial divine words to the human being constitute a sharing of power. From the beginning, God chooses not to be the only one who has power relative to the earth and the capacity, indeed the obligation, to exercise it. Human beings are invited to play an important role in the becoming of their world not unlike the role God plays.

I take a brief look at the verbs "be fruitful and multiply": If creative power is an essential element in the imaging of God, then human likeness to God in one respect consists in our procreative capacity. To that end, God builds into the very structure of these creatures the capacity to generate new life. By being what they were created to be and without the need for divine intervention or control, they can "naturally" be productive of new life and perpetuate their own kind. God is certainly present in the process (see Ps 139:13), but humans will do the procreating, not God!

Genesis 5:1-3 continues the theme. As God created humankind in the divine image and likeness, so Adam "creates" ("became the father of") Seth in his "likeness" and "image." Strikingly, God's creation of humankind in the image of God is placed as the first generation within the extensive genealogy of Genesis 5. This link suggests that human procreation is understood to be a genuinely creative act and finds its true parallel in God's own creative activity. In the language of the text, human beings have now

# BUT THE **FUTURE** IS ALSO UNSETTLED – **OUR WORDS AND DEEDS** WITH RESPECT TO THE CREATION WILL **MAKE A DIFFERENCE** WITH RESPECT TO THE **SHAPE OF** THE **FUTURE.**

assumed the role of creating the image of God or, more precisely, still further images of God, each of whom would carry on God's own breath of life into successive generations (2:9, cf. 9:6). In other words, the story of human generation that now follows in Genesis 5 stands in the tradition of God's creative activity.

(2) Gen 2:18-20. How God responds to God's own evaluation of "not good"? God's first move to take care of human aloneness is to create animals! And God then lets the *human being* decide whether the animals are adequate to move the evaluation of the creation from "not good" to "good." The human, not God, deems what is "fit for him." God places the creative possibilities before the human being, but it is the human that is given the freedom to decide. God so values human freedom that God takes seriously into account the human response in shaping the future of *creation*.

God, in turn, accepts the human decision. God takes the ongoing creational process into account in shaping new directions for the creation. Divine decisions interact with human decisions in the creation of the world. Creation is creaturely as well as divine.

*The human being at least in part shapes how God will be able to move into the future. The human judgment will shape the nature of the next divine creational decision, which will in turn shape the future of the world.*

The future is genuinely open here. It depends on what the human being does with what God presents. Will the human being decide for the animals? If so, what then? The question of not only how, but indeed whether humanity will continue beyond this first generation is left suspended in the mid-air of this creative moment. At least at this point, how the *human beings* in their God-given freedom decide about the animals will determine whether there will be a next human generation. The human being at least in part shapes how God will be able to move into the future. The *human* judgment will shape the nature of the next *divine* creational decision, which will in turn shape the future of the world.

The human being's naming of each creature is meant to be parallel to the naming by the Creator God in Gen 1:5-10. Notably, God names no living creatures in Genesis 1; that task is left up to the human in Genesis 2. Naming is a part of the creative process itself, discerning the very nature of intra-creaturely relationships. Human decisions are shown to be important in the ongoing development of the created order.

God recognizes the creational import of the human decision, for no additional divine word or act is forthcoming. God lets the man's exultation over the woman fill the scene; in lieu of a statement from God, the *human word* (the first uttered in Genesis) counts for the evaluation that the creation is now "good." It is left to the narrator to note the rightness of this creative move by drawing the reader into the closeness of the male-female bond, citing the implication of the *human* decision for the future of the creation.

#### ***A Concluding Comment***

I am amazed at how common the language of fatalism creeps into our thinking about the future. It is commonly thought that it doesn't make any difference what we do; the future is in God's hands. God has got the future all mapped out and what human beings do is finally irrelevant. [But] the future is partly settled and partly unsettled. It is partly settled, yes: there will be a new heaven and a new earth. But the future is also unsettled – our words and deeds with respect to the creation will make a difference with respect to the shape of the future.

Texts such as those we have considered place the responsibility for the future of creation directly on our plates as human beings. We cannot rest back and assume that God will take care of everything or that the future of the creation is solely in God's hands. *Ultimately* the creation is in God's hands, yes, but in the meantime, human beings are called not to passivity but to genuine engagement, and the decisions that we make will have significant implications for the future of the earth and even the nature of the future of God. What you do counts!



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"Genesis 1-2: God Created the World Good, Not Perfect."  
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# A CREATION FAITH-BASED MARKETPLACE MANIFESTO

~ Adapted from Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, *Lausanne Occasional Paper no. 40: Marketplace Ministry* (2005) ~



We believe in God the Creator who created the heaven and earth in six days and was satisfied with His work.

We believe God likes the material world—He made it and called it good.

We believe God made us in His image as junior co-workers to continue His creative work in the world.

We believe God enjoys and blesses human work, giving it to us before the Fall.

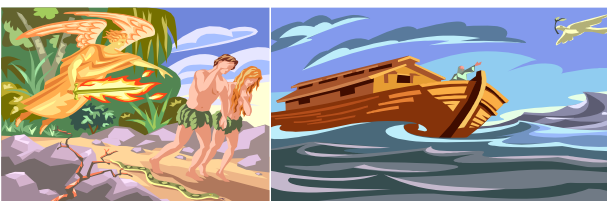
We believe God gave us royal dominion over the earth, to develop, tend, keep and guard it, and to make it a better world.



We believe the Fall resulted from humanity refusing God's created order by assuming god-like judgement and by worshipping the creature not the Creator.

We believe work is also now toil, hard labour and in vain because the ground is now cursed.

We believe God still maintains creation, renewing the creation mandate to Noah, and blessing and giving us good work.



We believe in the Son, the Word, the Worker, who re-creates and redeems humanity and the world through His nature miracles, marketplace teaching and parables, and above all the Cross.

We believe Jesus has been given all dominion in heaven and on earth as the true human and King who fulfils the creation commission.

We believe He commissions and delegates His dominion to us to make disciples and teach them to regain their royal heritage of working toward a better world.

We believe we are called and commissioned to bring Christ's presence and proclaim His royal rule to every sphere of work and every corner of creation.



We believe in the Holy Spirit, anticipating in hope His giving birth of a new, good creation, renewing the world of work which has been groaning in labour pains and subjected to futility.

We believe the Holy Spirit's creating and re-creating gifts and fruits are not only exercised inside the church but overflow to all creation through our everyday life and work.

We believe in, wait for and hasten a new heaven and new earth in which justice dwells and where we will rule under Christ, doing joyful, creative work forever in His Kingdom, which is creation fulfilled.



# On the Nightstand

## 讀好書

In each issue we will ask some of our friends to share their current reading list. In encouraging your consulting these resources, *Creatio* does not necessarily endorse every idea and viewpoint expressed in them.



*Dirt Cheap: Life at the Wrong End of the Job Market* by Elisabeth Wynhausen (Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 2005)

■ Simon Holt

I am a great believer in the integration of faith and work—enabling people to make clearer connections between their Christian faith and their daily life in the workplace. No doubt, the bridging of these two ‘spheres’ is overdue.

The task has found new steam in the last decade. An inspiring number of resources have surfaced exploring the theology of work and the practice of faith through work. Less inspiring is that the majority of this material is focussed on the work of a minority of people. In short, it's elitist.

Of course, this elitism is neither intentional nor sinister. The truth is, those who have the resources and inclination to address these issues do so as inhabitants of a particular world: the world of the university educated; the world of the professional or managerial classes. Any number of essays address the challenges in fields like law, business and finance, education and health care, just as there is an impressive range of resources geared toward marketplace leaders and the high fliers of the corporate world. But when it comes to the more mundane work of factory labourers, shop assistants, food service workers, cleaners and homemakers, there is comparative silence.

This silence is underlined by reading Elisabeth Wynhausen's *Dirt Cheap: Life at the Wrong End of the Job Market*. A journalist with *The Australian*, Wynhausen recounts a year working minimum wage jobs around Australia, from a waitress in an exclusive social club, a line-worker for an egg packing plant, a night cleaner in an office complex, a breakfast cook in an inner-city hotel, a cashier in a suburban discount store, to a kitchen hand in a retirement home.

It's a good book, providing sobering insights into the worlds that many Australian workers inhabit. What strikes Wynhausen most forcefully is the basic indignities that

many so-called 'unskilled' workers live with: "I may have spent the best part of a year in and out of the low-wage workforce doing things I'd never done before, from cleaning hotel toilets to laundering loads of institutional washing, but I had failed to adapt to the real indignity, being treated as a person of no consequence. I kept waiting to be consulted, about my own schedule, at least. I couldn't get it through my head that I was just another set of hands."

Of course, personal or vocational fulfillment is not high on the list of expectations for low-wage workers like these. As Wynhausen writes at one point: "Bothered by the idea that no one in the factory ever went home with the feeling they had done a good day's work, I had asked Sandra, a little twig of a woman in a big flannel shirt, if people took pride in what they did. Sandra looked at me as if I were cracked. 'You just do it,' she said. 'Like a robot,' said the woman next to her."

There is no doubt the challenges of low-wage work deserve more serious attention in the writing of faith-and-work enthusiasts like me. Perhaps, too, we do well to listen more and speak less when it comes to understanding the realities of work for many Australians.

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## Event 活動

楊錫鏘牧師「創造神學精粹」聚會  
Vocatio Creation · HKPES 主辦

### 週末密集課程：創造神學精粹

日期：2010年3月27日（六）

時間：上午9時至下午4時

地點：播道會港福堂

內容：聖經的創造觀有何重要？《創世記》兩個創造記載對我們有何啟迪？又如何解釋並承載我們的人生？日光之下，何以創造神學更為適切？本課程著重對話，助你釐清觀點，達致信仰上的範式轉移

協辦：播道會港福堂

### 退修營：知天命、行志業

日期：4月30日至5月2日（五至日）

地點：浸信會神學院

內容：本退修營以創造神學為師，讓你的人生閱歷跟聖經的創造觀，互相參透，互相詮釋，學習何以有智慧地在「日光之下」生活，生命得以更趨成熟，俾能知天命，行志業

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