

## 1: David Ray Griffin "Creation Out of Chaos and the Problem of Evil"

*A Creation-Order Theodicy has 5 ratings and 0 reviews. The central thesis of this extraordinary work is that the greater-good assumption associated with.*

If you enjoy transcripts, please consider supporting , which makes this possible. Hello this is Brian Auten of Apologetics God and Gratuitous Evil. The purpose of our interview today is to learn a bit more about Dr. Little and his work, discuss the topic of evil and theodicy and seek his advice for Christian apologists. Little, thanks for doing this interview. Would you mind telling our listeners a bit more about yourself and your background? I did not become a Christian until I was twenty years of age, and after coming to Christ, I soon went into the pastorate. You noted that I have written on the subject and lectured extensively on the subject of theodicy or the problem of evil, primarily because I found that that was the one of the largest questions, and the most difficult to answer. I developed a real interest almost from a selfish point of view, because I sensed this was a question that not only was being asked by the unbeliever, but was being asked by the believer as well. The unbeliever often used the problem of evil as an excuse for not believing that God exists. Now did you find that your experience as a pastor has guided your study, and would you say that you take a more of a person-centered approach rather than just a "if you will" a technical approach? I often liken it to a person who goes to an oncologist. They know they have cancer. What they really want from the oncologist is basically they just want a treatment plan. So I figured that if I were going to give a helpful answer to the person in front of me, then I needed to understand theoretically, technically, philosophically, theologically, however you want to speak of it I need to understand, as it were, the ins-and-outs of that, and how all of this related to God and my theology. So, I tried really to do both. That would be one kind of a theodicy. Could you explain the difference between merely a defense against the issues and problems or evil, versus a theodicy? I can give you possible explanations that defeat your argument. So one is somewhat of an easy, I should say easier "it tries to answer the objection more from the atheist. A moment ago you talked about there being different approaches that philosophers of religion take or in constructing a theodicy, so would you mind talking about a few of those approaches and why people take those different angles? There may be varieties, they may be nuanced a little bit differently, and your theology will determine how it is nuanced. That was crafted by Augustine, and Augustine tried to wrestle with the problem of evil. He is one of the first ones that actually tries to do something of a theodicy, in the Christian era. Augustine came to believe that God allowed only that evil in the world from which He could bring about a greater good, or prevent a worse evil. Now, we at once probably realize that the latter part of that is really kinda nonsensical, because it is counter-factual. So how do we know that it would have? What is the good? He only allows that evil in the world from which He brings about the greater good. The other way to establish it would be if you could establish it empirically. That good counterbalances the evil. But the problem is, is that it is precisely events like the Holocaust, the Trade Towers, the tsunamis, and what Stalin did in Russia "is precisely those types of evil to which we cannot point to a greater good. Immediately that raises questions for us: Who gets the good from this? Then you have to think about the mom, the dad, the aunts, the uncles, the grandparents etc. Not only what was good, but who gets the good? But that really seems to be counter, as far as I can tell, from the scriptures. That is not the kind of a God that I serve. I simply think you cannot sustain the argument. How does that work? That would be my sort of impression. And as I said earlier how many units of good are required to overcome so many units of evil? Yes, let me work from the back end and work backward on this. One of my basic theses is, Brian, that gratuitous evil exists in this creation, but that gratuitous evil does not come against the moral perfections of God, and that includes His sovereignty. Now how would that work? Well my understanding of creation is that when God created the universe, He creates it with certain rules, by which He will interact with man, and man will interact with Him. He can choose between two contraries, and because of that God respects the rules, the law that He has set up for the operation of the universe and His daily interaction with man. But the fact remains, that a lot of the evil that takes place in this world is not because God has ordained it, or allowed it in order to bring about some good, but it comes about because men

and women make really bad choices. If he turns the wheel to the left, then the automobile all things being functioning normally turns to the left. The other kind—the other way to use the word — the man is in control of his family. It simply means that there are rules in the family that everybody lives by, and that he oversees to make sure that people live by the rules. If you live in a deterministic world, then I am ultimately not responsible for the evil I do. Whereas if you live in a world as I think we do, where sovereignty is understood as God is in control of His universe, as a man is in control of his home, then you see real choices have real consequences. Can you talk about how pain would tie into that? There is a sense in which pain, I would think now—here again is my theology — my view would be that pain only entered human experience after the fall. So that if I scratch my arm and I feel the pain, well, it tells me to stop scratching my arm. It only helps to protect me. But as I say, it would be much better if I had no pain at all. If we look at pain in the sense that it informs me that something is wrong with my body. Now, speaking to Christian apologists who may be studying this issue or interacting with people about it — how do you think that they should approach their understanding to it and how should they interact with others in real life situations? Well, those are probably two questions. Let me answer the first. How should apologists address it? Well, what I would say is, however you would address it, number one — you wanna be consistent with your theology, because everything is theological. And the second thing, it seems to me, is that you have got to avoid having at the end of the day, God being responsible for evil. Now if you look at the early church, you will see the first three hundred years of church history — and then I would say even all the way up to at least the reformation — you will find that people argued as apologists with respect to the problem of evil, always intentionally and in a robust fashion, never coming up with an explanation of evil that ever put evil at the foot of God. God cannot be the one responsible for evil, and secondly you got to be consistent with your answer—with your theology. It turns things on their head. I think you have to avoid those things. His grace is always sufficient. Not to look for the good, but to look to God. God can work through the community of faith, but you need to not be looking for the good as a moral justification for why God permitted that into your life. If the good comes, thank God! How can we possibly make that kind of a judgment? How do you know your daddy would not have come to Jesus without the death of your mother? So what sort of resources would you wanna point people to, to get a broad understanding of that subject? Of course your own book I wanna link people to, but are there other authors or thinkers that have kind of influenced you along this line? Yes I would say that Michael L. In fact, it was his book that led me to do my doctoral dissertations on the problem of evil. And I think that Michael Peterson has done a really good job. Middelman has written called, *The Innocence of God*. Now just apart from the problem of evil and theodicy, what sort of other advice would you have for this next generation of Christian apologists? I just came from a seminar, a PhD seminar where we were discussing this issue today. I would say, one: The broad categories are epistemology and ontology. You need to be informed in those areas and how that works out in our everyday existence and practice. The second thing that I would argue is you seriously need to listen to what your culture is saying. I find that many apologists are answering questions or at least apologetics books are answering questions that nobody is asking. And so I would encourage people to consider reading some of the works of Francis Schaeffer to understand how to engage your culture apologetically. Apologetics is a non-profit ministry. You can support this work here.

### 2: Society of Evangelical Arminians | The Genius of Arminian Theodicy

*The Creation-Order theodicy zooms out as it were and places the particular of evil/suffering in the context of creation. I think one can make the point from Genesis that God not only decided what to create, but also established the rules (both physically and morally) by which He would interact with His creation.*

Hick distinguished between the Augustinian theodicy, which attempts to clear God of all responsibility for evil, based on human free will, and the Irenaean theodicy, which casts God as responsible for evil but justified because of its benefits for human development. All versions of this theodicy accept the theological implications of the Genesis creation narrative, including the belief that God created human beings without sin or suffering. Evil is believed to be a just punishment for the fall of man: He followed the Manichaean religion during his early life, but converted to Christianity in His two major works, *Confessions* and *City of God*, develop key ideas regarding his response to suffering. This helped him develop a response to the problem of evil from a theological and non-Manichean perspective, [10] based on his interpretation of the first few chapters of Genesis and the writings of Paul the Apostle. He argued that evil could come from humans because, although humans contained no evil, they were also not perfectly good and hence could be corrupted. He proposed two reasons for this: Firstly, humans have free will, and only those who choose to follow God will be forgiven and able to avoid Hell. Aquinas began by attempting to establish the existence of God, [21] through his Five Ways, and then attested that God is good and must have a morally sufficient reason for allowing evil to exist. He concluded that God is goodness, and that there is no evil in God. Faced with the assertion that humans would have been better off without free will, he argued that the possibility of sin is necessary for a perfect world, and so individuals are responsible for their sin. Aquinas noted that, although goodness makes evil possible, it does not necessitate evil. This means that God who is good is not cast as the cause of evil, because evil arises out of a defect in an agent, and God is seen to be without defect. Like Augustine, Aquinas asserted that humans bear responsibility for evil owing to their abuse of free will. Quoting the New Testament, Fortunatus proposed that evil exists beyond the evil acts people commit, and that people commit such acts because of their own flawed nature. He noted a distinction between using the term evil to imply blame sin and to imply lament suffering and argued that Augustine posited sin to have occurred before suffering. This was problematic for Zaccaria, who believed that it made Augustine seem offhand and uninterested in human suffering. Hick supported the views of the German theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher, which he classified as Irenaean, who argued that the world is perfectly suited for the moral development of humans and that this justifies the existence of evil. He insisted that, while the Augustinian theodicy attempted to justify historical occurrences of evil, the Irenaean theodicy seeks to justify God eternally. He questioned the success of the theodicy with the charge that it does not remove the blame for evil from God: Augustine presented a theology of predestination; Hick argued that, if God knew the choices that his creation would make, he must be responsible for them. Augustine also believed, as Hick did, that bringing good out of evil is preferable to the evil not occurring in the first place. Griffin argued in later works that humans cannot have free will if God is omniscient. He contented that, if God is truly omniscient, then he will know infallibly what people will do, meaning that they cannot be free. He proposed that original sin as Augustine conceived it must itself be caused by God, rendering any punishment he wills unjust. Griffin, a prominent process theologian, argues that God feels the pain of the world both physically and emotionally and does everything within his power to achieve good, but he can neither force beings to be good nor prevent evil because he does not play a coercive role in the world. He believed that, unless it could be shown that the two are not inconsistent, they would be necessarily contradictory. For this reason, Plantinga argued that an omnipotent God could not create any universe that he chooses, as Leibniz had proposed. He suggested that, even in a world where humans have free will, their actions may be so predictable that God could not create a world where they would do something unpredictable. Plantinga maintained that the existence of an omnipotent, benevolent God and the existence of evil are not inconsistent. Plantinga did not attempt to demonstrate that his proposition is true or plausible, just that it is logically possible. Assuming that he understands the meaning of the transaction and

has no other reason to accept the offer, it can be predicted that he will reject the offer.

## 3: The Failure of Greater Good Theodicies

*The Creation-Order theodicy is presented as an alternative acknowledging the reality of gratuitous evil without compromising or redefining the moral goodness, knowledge and power of God. Preview this book».*

Home Arminianism The Genius of Arminian Theodicy The Genius of Arminian Theodicy October 7, , posted by I do not accept what is known as a Greater-Good theodicy1 “ that all sin and evil serve a purpose in the mind and plan of God, from which He will bring about a greater good, since that indicates that God needs evil in order to bring about good. God does not need evil; sin and evil are not necessary. A Greater-Good theodicy renders sin and evil necessary. Could God prevent heinous evil from occurring? Yes, God is capable or possesses the power to eradicate all evil, but that is not the core meaning of the question. This question should, rather, be framed thusly: Why does God not prevent all evil? But even this question is complex, for some people are referring to really bad evil perhaps gratuitous evil which has no seeming purpose , rather than evil to lesser degrees. But even if God were to prevent really bad evil, what some people are truly referring to is God preventing all evil, which would, by necessity, include their own sin and evil. Bruce Little, quoted at length, comments: Another problem arises when one thinks through the logic of the question. If a horrific evil is horrific because of how it compares to another evil [which is subjective or relative to each person], then logically this will mean that all evil should be prevented. Consider the following argument. This means it will never have been a part of the human experience. Taken to its logical conclusion, the request would not stop until God has prevented all evil. The one asking such a question seems to have backed the believer and, by implication, God into a corner. Fickle human beings, skeptics, agnostics, and atheists among them, want their proverbial cake and eat it too. They want their freedom, to think and to behave in whatever manner they desire, but they also want God to prevent them from all evil. Why not just ask God to create a square circle? In other words, they are demanding an absurd contradiction. If God is to prevent all evil, then that would include the evil of each one of us, which means that we would not exist within the context of free will but be controlled by a meticulous Being akin to the version of God espoused by Calvinists, pagans, and other determinists. Little argues the case logically and persuasively: Whereas people really do choose to do evil, but God intervenes so their choices cannot come to fruition, then it follows that there is no way for God to prevent the worst evils without seriously impinging on the authenticity of the power of moral freedom. In reality, the only choices that people would be permitted to make would be the choices resulting in good or, in other words, obedience to God. In attempting to fix one thing, this logic concludes with the very aspect of man that makes him a unique being is destroyed, forming him into something other than a being made in the image of God. In the end, the possibility of God eliminating all horrific evil is not a real possibility regardless of how good it sounds in the sentence. This means creating man as a rationally functioning personal being capable of authentic love and moral judgment. That God created human beings capable of love in no sense indicates that God, even though He enables depraved sinners toward faith in Christ, chooses to unconditionally select who will love Him. This is a consequence with which I always wrestled as a Calvinist “ that, in unconditionally selecting to save some people and not others, He was also unconditionally selecting who will and who will not love Him. Arminian theology, Arminian theodicy, posits that God, through His Holy Spirit and by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, graciously enables depraved sinners to respond to that grace, and we name this response faith. As a consequence of a gracious enablement, an individual is freed to respond in faith, with an authentic expression of love for God. Loving God is the highest function of a created being to which all men are called Matt. The genius of Arminian theology “ the theology of the early Church “ is that it gives human beings, created in the image of God, the God-given power of moral choice in a way that is authentic. The objection here is that the evil is allowed for that purpose “ His purposes are being served at your expense. God and Gratuitous Evil Lanham: University Press of America, Inc.

## 4: Paroikos Bible Blog: A Different Kind of Theodicy

*A Creation-Order Theodicy: God and Gratuitous Evil [Bruce A. Little] on [www.enganchecubano.com](http://www.enganchecubano.com) \*FREE\* shipping on qualifying offers. The central thesis of this extraordinary work is that the greater-good assumption associated with Greater-Good theodicies is unnecessary to the defense of theism and has actually strengthened the argument from evil by the atheist.*

Irenaeus[ edit ] Second-century philosopher Irenaeus developed a theodicy based on the idea that the creation of humans is still in progress. Irenaeus believed the first stage is complete, but the second stage requires humans to develop and grow into the likeness of God, a stage which Irenaeus believed is still in progress. He believed that, in order to achieve moral perfection, humans must be given free choice, with the actual possibility of choosing to do evil. Irenaeus believed that this world would include some suffering and evil to help people draw closer to God. Jonah ended up repenting for his sin and the people of Nineveh turn to God. This fire would purify believers ahead of a new human community existing in the New Jerusalem. Origen used two metaphors for the world: Through an allegorical reading of Exodus and the books of Solomon , Origen casts human development as a progression through a series of stages which take place in this life and after death. Hell is a metaphor for the purification of our souls: Schleiermacher began his theodicy by asserting that God is omnipotent and benevolent and concluded that, because of this, "God would create flawlessly". He proposed that it would be illogical for a perfect creation to go wrong as Augustine had suggested and that evil must have been created by God for a good reason. Hick distinguished between the Augustinian theodicy, based on free will, and the Irenaean theodicy, based on human development. He argued that to be created in the image of God means to have the potential for knowledge of and a relationship with God; this is fulfilled when creation in the likeness of God is complete. Humanity currently exists in the image of God and is being developed into spiritual maturity. Hick justifies this by appealing to the concept of mystery. He argues that, if suffering was always beneficial to humans, it would be impossible for humans to develop compassion or sympathy because we would know that someone who is suffering will certainly benefit from it. However, if there is an element of mystery to suffering, to the effect that some people suffer without benefit, it allows feelings of compassion and sympathy to emerge. A genuinely loving God, he argued, would have created humans with free will. Hick held that it would be possible for God to create beings that would always freely choose to do good, but argued that a genuine relationship requires the possibility of rejection. Hick argued that this would leave humans unable to help or harm one another, allowing them no moral choices and so preventing moral development. He proposed a universalist theory, arguing that all humans would eventually reach heaven. Hick believed that there would be no benefit or purpose to an eternal Hell, as it would render any moral development inconsequential. The eternal suffering of Hell could not be explained in terms of human development, so Hick rejected it. Despite this, he did not reject the existence of Hell outright, as to do so could make living morally in this life irrelevant. Rather, he argued that Hell exists as a mythological concept and as a warning of the importance of this life. Knowledge of these consequences must be based on experienceâ€”Swinburne rejected the idea that God could implant such knowledge, arguing that humans would question its reliability. The doctrine proposes that God is benevolent but suggests that his power is restricted to persuasion, rather than coercion and so is unable to prevent certain evil events from occurring. Robert Melse argued that, although suffering does sometimes bring about good, not all suffering is valuable and that most does more harm than good. He argued that the Irenaean theodicy supposes that God inflicts pain for his own ends, which Griffin regarded as immoral. Phillips[ edit ] D. Phillips argued that the magnitude of suffering experienced in the Holocaust cannot be justified by any apparent gains. Philosopher Dewi Zephaniah Phillips published *The Problem of Evil and the Problem of God* in , presenting a challenge to the Irenaean theodicy. Phillips maintained throughout his work that humans are incapable of fully understanding God, and presented an understanding of the moral diversity of human existence. In the novel, the character Ivan Karamazov presents an account of incredible cruelty to innocent people and children to his theist brother, Alyosha. Following this, Ivan asks his brother if he would, hypothetically, choose to be the

architect of the eternal happiness of mankind, which would come into existence, if, and only if he would torture an innocent child, a necessary evil, after which this eternal happiness would come into existence. He also challenged the suffering both of animals and of young children. Neither of these instances of suffering serve any useful purpose, as they cannot lead to moral development. Finally, he questioned whether the current universe is the best possible world for the moral development of humans. Citing the examples of those who die young and those who experience too great a pain to learn from it, as well as people who suffer too little to learn anything, he suggested that this world is not ideally suited to human development. Blocher argued that universalism contradicts free will, which is vital to the Irenaean theodicy, because, if everyone will receive salvation, humans cannot choose to reject God. Hick did attempt to address this issue: Blocher proposed that Hick must then accept a level of determinism , though not going all the way. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Retrieved 17 September

### 5: EPS Web Author Profiles - Evangelical Philosophical Society

*A creation-order theodicy: God and gratuitous evil. [Bruce A Little] -- Does the existence of evil disprove the existence of God? Little (philosophy of religion, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary) examines the "Greater-Good" theodicy, which he considers an.*

Paroikos Bible Blog Purpose: It is hoped that this blog will simultaneously provide food-for-thought to the reader while pointing him or her in the direction of valuable resources, both in print and on the internet, that will further help his or her studies in the Word. In his book *A Creation-Order Theodicy: God and Gratuitous Evil* Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, , Dr. Little presents his development of a theodicy that provides an alternative to the usual "greater-good" theodicies so often seen in Christian philosophy. A theodicy is a defense of the existence of God in light of the existence of evil. A standard "greater-good" theodicy is the argument, more or less, that "all evil in the world could be justified on grounds that God permits only that evil from which He can bring a greater good or prevent some greater evil" Little, 2. The result is that "if the evil is necessary, then God must determine the evil in order to assure it will come to pass so that the good can obtain" Little, Secondly, if God uses evil to bring about good, then would not this lead to the conclusion that, at least for God, the end justifies the means? See the following pages for further discussion of shortcomings in a greater-good theodicy. He follows Augustine in arguing that evil should not be viewed of as a "thing" so much as the lack of good, or "a condition of privation in something that is good" Thus, for God himself and his interaction within the Trinity, there is only perfect good and no hint of evil Thus Little places a heavy emphasis on human choice as reflecting the image of God. In answer to the question, "is it possible that God could prevent the most horrific evils and still honor the power of moral choice? Thus the mere existence of evil guarantees that there will always be a "most horrific evil," but no particular evil is absolutely necessary Little seems to follow the "best of all possible worlds" view, though this is not as apparent until later in the book esp. Naturally this alone would require a separate analysis from the reader. Secondly, in regards to his critique of greater-good theodicy, Little is not arguing that God never brings evil out of good, only that he does not necessarily do so. At least the reader who is interested in the problem of evil should give Little a second-look.

## 6: Rethinking the Problem of Evil: A Unified Theodicy (Part 1) – Introduction

*The Creation-Order theodicy is presented as an alternative acknowledging the reality of gratuitous evil without compromising or redefining the moral goodness, knowledge and power of God. Product Details.*

Rethinking the Problem of Evil: In addition to the lives lost, homes have been destroyed, priceless heirlooms lost forever, and it has been a traumatic experience that will not leave the psyche of the victims anytime soon. As theists, in particular Christians, look to an event such as this we are forced to wonder why God would allow such a tragedy. Why would God allow this particular evil to befall innocent people? This question has been asked for thousands of years and, to date, a satisfactory answer has yet to be given. The problem of theodicy has been a problem apologists have struggled with almost since the dawn of Christendom. When Rome was sacked in by the Visigoths, the great Christian theologian and philosopher Saint Augustine found himself attempting to address why God has allowed such an evil. The logical problem of evil is concerned with whether or not a good God can co-exist with an evil world, or if one cancels the other out. Finally, the existential problem of evil deals with the personal evil we experience in our own lives, sometimes so great that it shakes our faith in God. To date, no one theodicy has adequately addressed all three problems. While in the West certain theodicies have dealt with a particular category, to my knowledge no theodicy has been offered to work with all three divisions, at least not in a manner that is intellectually and personally satisfying. Thus, my goal with this essay is to provide a cohesive explanation on why God allowed evil in the first place and why He allows specific evils. I plan to accomplish this goal by turning to philosophy, early Christian writers as viewed through the teachings of Saint John of Damascus [2] , and Scripture. Certainly this is no easy task, but it is a worthy one. Before providing an introduction to the sections of my essay, I should note first and foremost that I do not accept my Unified Theodicy as complete or without problems. Rather, I am writing it in the hopes of starting a dialogue – or continuing a dialogue begun by Dr. It is my hope that someone far better than I will build upon what I have composed, or tear it apart and build something better; so long as an answer is found, I do not care. I use Plantinga to explain the logical problem of evil with his free will defense and Little to address the evidential problem of evil with his Creation-Order Theodicy. Likewise, I justify my own Unified Theodicy by turning to the Damascene and to Scripture in particular the book of Job. In the first section I deal with the terms I will be using and what I mean by specific terms. While the reader is welcome to disagree with the definitions I provide, I provide them as a way to ensure that the disagreement is an actual disagreement and not one over terms. The second section is dedicated to defining the problem of evil. In many seminaries some future pastors forget the implications of the problem of evil and that many Christians can go astray in their theology in order to answer it. Moving on from the logical problem of evil, in the fourth section, which is the biggest section, I explain the evidential problem of evil. I explain the two attempts to solve it – greater-good theodicies and Creation-Order theodicy – and how these are applied to the problem of evil. However, I do point out the perceived shortcomings of Creation-Order theodicy as well, showing that the evidential argument of evil has yet to be properly addressed by theistic philosophers and theologians. I attempt to explain why such evil seems to be beyond a rational explanation, which sets me up for a presentation of my Unified Theodicy. The sixth section is dedicated to my Unified Theodicy and how it is best applied to the logical, evidential, and existential problems of evil. It is here where I point out that when dealing with the problem of evil specifically gratuitous evil we must constantly look to the love of God, specifically His gratuitous love. This is central to Eastern theodicies, but is seemingly lacking in the West. While such reasoning may be confusing now, I do go into great detail showing how love has to be central to any further theodicies. Also within the sixth section I deal with possible objections that people would have to my theory. I know these objections because they are objections I initially had while working my way through the problem of evil and a possible solution. I conclude the essay with the seventh section, which focuses on the suffering Savior. While many Christian philosophers are quick to dismiss the cross as the ultimate explanation for evil, it is my belief that this is often to our own detriment. As a final note, I should point out that I am assuming some things in my arguments. For instance, I take on the traditional view of God as unlimited in all logical

ways, meaning He is not limited in His knowledge of past, present, or future, or even of what could have been. Likewise, I am assuming that man has free will. I would rather deal with the traditional elements of the faith than to argue against what are potentially heretical beliefs that have only been formed as responses to the problem of evil. This is a point that I will bring up later in this essay, as it is central to my Unified Theodicy. Likewise, his book *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* is a summary of what the Church had taught up to that point in history. *A Theology of the Event* Indiana University Press, where he explains that God is a force, not a person, that is weak. It could be that all I am doing is adding to the C-O Theodicy, though I suspect that I am still differing from it on some major points. However, there is much more work required on the C-O Theodicy before it can be ruled out as a legitimate answer.

### 7: An Interview with Bruce Little (PhD) on the "Problem of Evil" | Matt Capps Blog

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Posted by Bob Sprigg in Philosophical , Theological. Leave a comment The book of Genesis holds many answers to the questions people have been asking for thousands of years. The answers are there, if you will search them out in the scriptures! Even though Genesis 10 describes specifically the dividing of the nations, I believe that the actual dispersal took place naturally as a result of the confusion of languages caused by God at the great tower of Babel mentioned in Gen. But chapter 10 has already divided the nations according to peoples and tongues. Genesis often goes outside the chronological order to arrange the material thematically. The exact chronology is only hinted at in the expression about Peleg: As people were isolated, or not, married within groups, more changes in languages developed, as did certain physical traits, cultures and eventually, civilizations. The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures. Victor Books, c, S. Baker Book House, , He felt that since philosophy was highly regarded by them, that they might take a second look at Christianity if he could prove that Christianity had intellectual value. Tertullian believed just the opposite. He felt that Christianity could and should stand on its own merit through the use of the Scriptures and apostolic teaching and tradition. Adding the philosophies of man would only confuse the issue. Even today, especially in more hostile situations, there may be opportunities to gain the ear of unbelievers by finding some common ground with which to relate to them. Rational arguments, philosophy and scientific evidence may be used apologetically to reach this goal. Once common ground is reached, the Gospel must then be clearly communicated or else the apologetic attempt will be for nothing. The defense is not complete without the complete truth revealed. There is also the danger that the apologetic information becomes the total argument, or doctrine is defiled by it. For example, intelligent design may be useful as beginning ground, but the apologist must share who the designer is. Many have found themselves conformed to the world and its devices rather than taking a stand for Biblical truth. We must maintain our Christian principles so that our testimony and Christian conscience remains intact and evident before those who are seeking answers. Then, once we have earned the right to share our faith with them through relationship building, they will listen! Consider carefully the next three passages of scripture—How will you reconcile these in your witness to those without Jesus??? Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ, that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And what concord hath Christ with Belial? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Logos Research Systems, Inc. Leave a comment Everyone approaches a world-view and apologetics with some basic presuppositions. Believers and unbelievers alike have been trained in their own set of presuppositions about general or spiritual truth from their parents, experiences, education and culture. In understanding the unbeliever and their philosophies, beliefs and culture, the evangelist may find help in engaging him with the Gospel message. When all is said and done, it is the sharing of the Gospel that confronts the sinner with Jesus. We are only able to plant the seed of the Gospel, or water it, but it is God alone who can bring about conversion of the soul 1 Cor. Two basic presuppositions must be in place before a person is able to respond to the Gospel, though he may not be completely aware of it. One must believe in the existence of God as is recorded in the Bible. One must believe that what is written in the Bible record is true. If the Bible is true and the God of the Bible exists, then the Gospel message is true and the need for salvation is true. Though we may be the ones who share this message, it is God, through the work of the Holy Spirit,

that convicts the heart. This is when believing faith can happen! Barackman notes that an unbeliever must assent to the facts of the Gospel and trust in Christ and His atoning work. To give assent to these facts is to acknowledge their truthfulness. Rather than being a nonrational leap into some undefined experience, salvational faith embraces what God says in His Word about Jesus and His atoning work. However, The Creation-Order is the most reasonable explanation for the existence of a good and all-powerful God and the presence of evil. It correlates with scripture, does not charge God with a lack of interest or compassion, and answers all categories of ever present evil. It also correlates well with Dispensational and conservative Systematic Theology, though that was not its aim. Perhaps there is something, whether both in us, because we were created in the image of our loving, holy Creator, and in His special, written revelation to us, that we may gain a little.

### 8: Philosophical | BOBSPRIGG

*In 'Creation Order Theodicy' you put up an argument for 'the best of all possible worlds', some would say this is irrelevant in formulating a theodicy. Why is the 'best of all possible worlds' argument important to the theodicy?*

This is the blog area for the Evangelical Philosophical Society and its journal, *Philosophia Christi*. Monday, November 22, Creation-Order Theodicy: Interview with Bruce A. Part one can be read [here](#). I think one can make the point from Genesis that God not only decided what to create, but also established the rules both physically and morally by which He would interact with His creation. This provides a larger narrative in which to understand the problem of evil other things as well, but we are dealing with evil here. What this means is, that God has restricted the manifestation of some of His attributes when interacting with His creation so that humanity could function as true humanity and history would be something more than a piece of theater. I would suggest that it is as in the Incarnation where there is a self-imposed limitation in the expression or manifestation of certain attributes. What are its strengths compared to the weaknesses of great-good theodicies? Well, I think the strength is that it allows for gratuitous evil without that evil counting against the moral perfections of God. I remember Ronald Nash in his book *Faith and Reason* saying that if it could be shown that gratuitous evil as a reality and not merely apparent that this would tip the scales in favor of the theist. Maybe I have not done that, but I have attempted to do it. His argument has been at least in a majority of cases involving evidential argument where is the good. What if, we did not have to defend that position and hence not required to show the good. It does seem to me that this would be of real value. Theodicies have different explanatory powers to them. But which theodicy might be more conducive to pastoral care and leadership; helping people to reckon with and be responsible with the reality of evil in their ordinary life. I have found the approach in expressed in the Creation Order theodicy to be most helpful. We live in a fallen world, it is very messy and ugly at times. As Solomon said in *Ecclesiastes* life is not fair. So in suffering we do not look for some good, but we look to God look to God who is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort 2 Cor 1: I always found that Christians were caught in some tension when told that God allowed this for some greater good. If God allowed my baby to be killed, then there is a emotional resistance to look to that God for help. I know people have tried to do this, but I have often dealt with the personal aftermath of it all. Now there is much more that could be said here that might balance out some of what I have said but I will leave it there. How has this study been significant to your own formation, whether as a pastor, theologian, professor, etc? It has been extremely significant to me in all areas as you mention. Because I do think it is the most troubling issues for both Christians and non-Christians. As I mentioned earlier, it has freed me to look to God in the sufferings of humanity for his mercy, comfort, and grace and not try to find some good for myself or others as the moral justification for the suffering. It has given me a view of God which I think is consistent with the biblical view, that is, God often enters into my suffering with me. I do not know how to express this as clearly as I should without risk being misunderstood. I think, however, God weeps for us in our suffering and his promise to us is that there is a Day coming when all of this shall be passed because of the work of Christ on the Cross. He is not indifferent nor is He distant in my suffering. His promise is not that some good will come, but that His mercy, comfort, and grace are always available. It is that this evil has happened, not because God does not have the power or inclination to stop it, but there are our values in creation that must be respected. They must be respected because God respects the moral freedom He has given to humanity so that they can be true humanity, so that history can be something more than a piece of theater. God actually interacts and responds to the choices of humanity and that is a value that cannot be quickly overturned just to make life here a little more comfortable. I would hope that people would critically interact with the Creation-Order theodicy to see if it meets its burden of proof. If not, to find other ways to make the same point. If that fails, then we should probably give up this idea that gratuitous evil is real and not only apparent and that it does not count against the moral perfections of God. You can learn more about Bruce Little by visiting his website [www](#).

### 9: Bruce Little Interview Transcript | Apologetics

*The Augustinian theodicy, named for the 4th- and 5th-century theologian, philosopher and (according to some Christian denominations) Saint Augustine of Hippo, is a type of Christian theodicy designed in response to the evidential problem of evil.*

August 27, at 2: So I decided to contact one of my former professors, Dr. Russ Bush Center for Faith and Culture. This basically means that he does not believe in radical freedom. What is a theodicy, and why is it important that pastors think through the issues of evil and suffering? A theodicy is a way of explaining the ways of God regarding the matter of evil. I served as pastor for over 30 years and that is where I first started thinking deeply about all this. In fact, I did not know that it was called a theodicy in those days. I realized that people need answers regarding the reality of evil and suffering in this world. Furthermore, those answers had to square with what I had just preached on the Sunday before. The problem is that at once when we suffer we wonder why God did not protect me from it. In fact, maybe I had even prayed that He would, or I have been good, why did this come to me. But, the tension comes because we believe God is all-good, all-knowing, and all-powerful and that He is the sovereign of Creation, yet His creation is riddled with evil and suffering. So, as a pastor we need to have answers that not only answer the cry of the heart, but the objections of the non-Christian. The argument from evil is probably the most often heard objection to believing there is a God. Maybe at first the individual simply needs for you to pray with them, weep with them, listen to them, but in the end, they will want answers to their legitimate questions about God and evil. If Christianity is a superior belief system to all others, then we must have an answer at this most important point. In a situation of pastoral counseling, how would you approach such a question? You are right; this is the great question, especially suffering of children. In pastoral counseling, I think the approach is that we confront people with the reality that we live in a fallen world, one that is out of joint. It is not as it was intended to be. There is a lot of evil and suffering in this world because nature is out of joint and moral agents choose to do evil things that bring suffering. In fact, I would go so far as to say that in many cases He weeps for humanity for all its suffering as this is not the way it was intended. When I read the Gospels, I find Jesus, who revealed the Father to us, having compassion on those who suffered. I have always tried to have them focus on the God who will never leave or forsake us, to know that He walks with us through the difficulty if we know Him, and to know that His grace can strengthen us to be a testimony in the midst of our difficulties. Many times, people think that the suffering has been allowed by God to bring some good to their lives so they try to find the good. However, on many occasions that has led to bitterness because they never found the good. I am not saying that we may not learn valuable lessons in our suffering, but that does not mean that is why the suffering came to us. God may bless, but if He does, it is in spite of the suffering, not because of the suffering. In that case, we simply praise God for His grace. I have known a good number of people who spent time trying to find the good so they could still believe God and when they did not find it they became bitter towards God. I would say that it is important in formal debate or discussion within the academy. The reason is, that for the Christian, evil is not a problem in the sense that does not cause us to wonder whether God is there or not—so in that sense it is not a problem. What it is, is an argument by the atheist to claim that God cannot exist as the all-good, all-knowing, all-powerful God in light of all the evil. Some argue that it is a logical impossibility for God to exist, others argue that it is more probable that God does not exist than that He does exist. So, in that case I would make the point that we are dealing with an argument and then see if the argument wins the day. That is, is evil a defeater of the claim that God exists. Of course I think it is not. You devote a good portion of your book to refuting this argument. Why is it that this argument fails? Well, this argument fails because it simply lacks biblical support in my mind. I know that many use Ro 8: This means that it would only be an answer for suffering of the Christian and further, I believe the context of the text limits it to only when one suffers for righteousness. This is what Jesus teaches in Matt 5: So, I think that Ro 8: There are other verses, but I believe they fail to support the Greater Good theodicy. Other reasons it fails, I think, tend to be obvious once we think about it. According to the Greater-Good theodicy abortion is allowed by God in order to bring about a greater good. If that is the

case, then we should not stop abortion for in doing so the good God intended is denied, but we are called to stand for social justice and against evil practices. The same argument goes for prayer. Why we would pray for someone when they are terminally ill it is allowed by God for a greater good. Furthermore, we must ask the question: If it is a necessary good, then the evil that brings it is necessary and the only way it could be necessary is if God planned it. This makes God responsible for evil, something I think is clearly contrary to scripture because God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If on the other hand the good is not necessary then we are back to asking the question why the evil? In addition, if the good cannot come about except by evil, then God needs evil to accomplish something good which means there are certain things God cannot do, namely bring about the good without evil. I am doubtful that one really would want to accept that conclusion. Of course much more could be said on this matter, but I will let this serve as my answer at this time. Well, I say that God does not need evil to bring glory to himselfâ€”He will do that anyway. While it is true that in the end, every knee shall bow and confess Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father, that is another issue altogether. So I think the response fails to see that there is a difference in God receiving glory in the judgment and God needing judgment to bring Him glory. In my thinking, this response fails to understand the heart of God. Much of the evil that comes touches the innocent, so in this case, innocents suffer profoundly so that God can be glorified in judging the person who committed the crimeâ€”you know like raping a little girl and then burying her alive. Think of the multiplied suffering that caused for the little girl, her family, her friends, and her communityâ€”all so that God can get glory in judging the one committing the evil. In my mind, the best of all possible worlds is necessary to answer the question: It is not just that He did less than what He could have done, like making another kind of animal, this acting in a fashion below His creative capabilities concerns the morality of God. That is, a serious indictmentâ€”God acting in a fashion that reveals an act not sponsored by His perfect goodness. Furthermore, but connected to this, is I think that the logic of a God who holds all His attributes in maximal perfection requires that in all things He does the best that is possible under the circumstances. If God does not do what is best in the actualizing of the world and yet He claims it is very good, then one wonders about the summary statement. In addition, if He does not do His best, then one could reply that He is morally delinquent for not doing His moral best. By two minds, I mean two kinds of mindsâ€”real minds. We have the divine mind and the human mind. If the human mind is to function as a true mind, then it must have the capacity to think and to choose which means man must have what is called libertarian freedom. But man is not a machine, he is a being made in the image of God. He is given commands and is expected to obey them, but with the possibility he will disobey them. If man chooses to disobey, there are consequences and he is held responsible for his choices. We must understand that we have a real person to person relationship with God, not just a personal relationship in the sense of a private relationship. We need to think about this deeply. But more than this, man is called to love God. You cannot love God without having the freedom to choose to love and this requires a mind, otherwise, it would be something else, but it would not be love. This is important to my theodicy as it places the problem of evil in a larger context, the context of creation, and the wonder of man having a real mind to which God can communicate and with which man can understand and respond either affirming or denying the truth God communicates. We surely see this in Gen 3. Middle knowledge is a large subject, but in its basic form it affirms that God not only knows what man does or will do, God knows the choices man would have made under different circumstances or in a different world. So, God saw all the possible worlds and then actualized the best of those worlds. So, in any world man freely chooses what he chooses. When God actualizes a world the one in which we live, the choices we make in this world are free choices. However, because this is the world God has sovereignly chosen, our free choices are fixed and the end is assured as God knows the end from the beginning of this creation. Do you have any forthcoming projects or work in this area? Yes, I am working on a book which places the problem of evil in a much larger context. That means, as a part of our larger Christian worldview and how Christians understand better how to reach their culture.

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