

Seeking the Shalom of the University

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GCF 27 February 2017

Outline

- Introduction
- ‘Seek the shalom of the city’: Jeremiah 29, and 1 Peter
- Niebuhr’s ‘Christ and Culture’ taxonomy applied to Christian involvement with academic life
- The ‘Developing a Christian Mind’ programme

Seeking the shalom of the city

Jeremiah 29: 1-7

- a) Exile in 586 BC
- b) How long in exile?
- c) How to live in Babylon?
- d) Astonishing instructions
- e) What was Yahweh up to?

Seeking the shalom of the city

1 Peter [see Bruce Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City* (1994)]

- a) Language of 'exile': a chosen people, distinctive lifestyles, subject to hostility
- b) 'Live good lives': public benefactors, whole church, to demonstrate the truth of the gospel

Christ and Culture

Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* [1951]:

- Christ above culture – the Christian university
- Christ and culture in paradox – university is part of the secular order – faith is for the community of believers
- Christ the transformer of culture – calls for ‘constructive engagement’ with the secular university (James Davidson Hunter, *To change the world* [2010])

Discussion

Which of Niebuhr's three options on Christ and culture ['above', 'in paradox', 'transformer'] is likely to be the most appropriate for the church in interaction with the university in the 21st century?

Developing a Christian mind programme

Two key biblical texts: Mark 12: 28-30, Romans 12: 1-2 – the call to consistent discipleship to include the mind

The challenges:

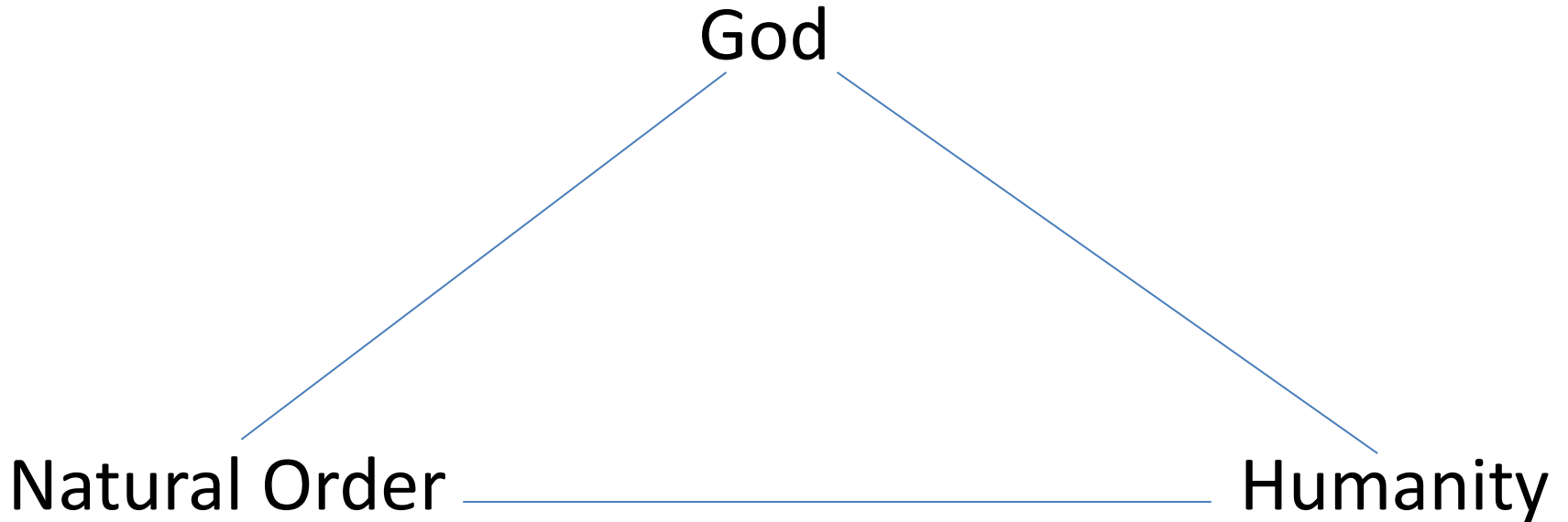
- The presuppositions of our disciplines
- Values and ethics

Discussion

What do you think are the main intellectual and ethical challenges for Christians within your academic discipline?

Do you feel well prepared to defend your faith in these challenges?

The Christian world view



Discussion

Is your understanding of your Christian faith on an intellectual par with your understanding of your academic discipline? If not, does it matter?

Application of the Christian worldview

How do we know things? How do we set about the pursuit of truth in our academic study?

How should we evaluate? What ethical values are implicit in the way our discipline is pursued and applied?