

Response to
Excellence-An Augustinian Tension
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Trevor Cairney
Master of New College, UNSW

First let me thank Dr Wright for his fascinating and insightful talk on

(George Herbert). But I feel a little uncomfortable with the stronger statements of Jamie Smith and others like Paul Griffiths who use words like 'co-regents' and 'co-creators'.

This

as gifts of grace”. And of course our students in their often unregenerate state give us constant reminders of God’s grace in young lives.

As an aside, let me quote Wayne Grudem who reminds us that God takes pleasure in everything in creation that mirrors his own excellence². Ultimately, only God is truly excellent. Only He can tower above the rest. But any sense of excellence that we witness in others that mirrors the excellence of God, even if only dimly, brings pleasure to God and ultimately glory to Him. God’s creation can in some way demonstrate some of the attributes of God seen as perfect only in Him (e.g. love, mercy, justice, holiness, mercy...). We are to be “imitators of God” (Eph 5:1), but while encouraging our students to seek excellence, they like us, can never attain His excellence. But we seek it to bring glory and honour to the one who is the source of all excellence, not our self-glory.

Dr Wright reminded us to look for excellence in all its forms, and with this I completely agree. In my life as a teacher and head of a Residential College, I have found that it is often seen in the ‘in between’ places. We witness it in the student who volunteers to do more than their share of tasks expected of a particular role. It is seen in the student who shares their ideas on the next assignment because they want the other student to succeed. It is seen in how individuals care for others in their brokenness and despair.

I have witnessed this in startling form within

