Global Faculty Initiative

The Faculty Initiative

seeks to promote the integration

of Christian faith and academic disciplines

by bringing theologians into conversation with scholars

across the spectrum of faculties

in research universities

worldwide.

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Preview Response

WE CAN FLOURISH IN ADVERSITY, SICKNESS AND DYING

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This brief describes well how medicine has gone astray: "experts in means but amateurs in ends.” We doctors have come to focus far too much on patients *feeling* well, while ignoring both society’s responsibility in ameliorating adverse circumstances (see Bradley & Taylor’s *The American Health Care Paradox*) and patients’ agency in caring for themselves. No wonder patients don’t flourish.

Having said this, there’s still part of me inclined toward a Stoic sense of eudaimonia that holds that one can flourish through the cultivation of a life of virtue despite feelings and circumstances. I’m partial toward this view because I have experienced flourishing (of self and others) in the face of great adversity. Perhaps it constitutes a second-rate, heavily qualified form of flourishing. But to say that flourishing is impossible when, for example, a patient is sick or dying, is to settle for too narrow a view of human flourishing.

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