



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

JUSTICE / MEDICINE

Lydia Dugdale

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I am struck that the modern practice of medicine often challenges Wolterstorff's treatment of justice ("rendering to each what is his or her right, or due") in two key ways. First, the regnant principle in medicine is respect for autonomy, which means that treatment for patients often becomes mere wish fulfillment (which may in fact be unjust). And second, inherent to the practice of medicine is a sort of mercy that overlooks culpability on the patient's part. The smoker thus receives treatment for his lung cancer, and the intravenous drug user treatment for her hepatitis C, despite their own complicity in becoming sick—again, a matter of mercy, not justice.

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