



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.**

www.globalfacultyinitiative.net

Preview Response

FORCED DISPLACEMENT ERODES EVERY DIMENSION OF FLOURISHING

Christopher Hays

President, Scholar Leaders

Formerly Professor of New Testament at the Fundación Universitaria Seminario Bíblico de Colombia in Medellín, Colombia

Director of the Faith and Displacement project at the Biblical Seminary of Colombia in Medellín, Colombia

In my work with victims of forced displacement due to violence in Colombia, the concept of “holistic human flourishing” serves as a key organizing principle. Our holistic focus has broken down the facets of human flourishing in spiritual, economic, social, political, pedagogical, and psychological terms, not necessarily because these exhaust the different aspects of what it means to be human, but because these are the areas most damaged by the displacement experience and therefore requiring the most direct intervention.

For victims of displacement, the “circumstantial” dimension of their flourishing has typically been severely compromised by their trauma, impoverishment, and loss. Therefore, we seek to support the “agential” dimension of their lives, helping people recover economic, social, political (etc.) flourishing in spite of the many circumstantial obstacles they confront. In each of our areas of labor, we combine insights of Christian theology with those of the human and social sciences, believing that spiritual health and the accompaniment of the Holy Spirit are vital components of the recuperation of flourishing in other areas of life. Those resources specifically from the Christian faith are what make the “agential” dimension of our work more than the mere exercise of agency; it is what ensures that the way people go about recovering their economic, social, and political well-being is in fact an expression of *righteousness*. So also, we believe that the “emotional” dimension is inseparable from the agential dimension, such that we give specific attention to mental health alongside more explicitly “agential” aspects of flourishing.

At all levels of our work, we foster relations between victims and non-victim Christian communities, mobilizing believers as mentors, allies, and co-laborers with the displaced community. This strategy is rooted in our vision of Christian mission, but also reflects that, however much displaced people are circumstantially disadvantaged, one circumstantial advantage they enjoy is that Christ and his Body are on their side.

For more information

www.globalfacultyinitiative.net