

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.

Preview Response

JUSTICE / SOCIAL SCIENCES

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I appreciate very much Nick's foundation of justice in relationships. This is, to me, a very Biblical picture. It also drives me into Scripture itself, searching after what a "right relationship" might actually be. How, after all, to understand the normative structure of a friendship, or a business relationship, or our relationship to creation? We have clues, I think, in the "first book" of Creation, but the "second book" of the Scriptures gives us the best picture of what *shalom*, right relationships, might *specifically* look like.

On the other hand, while - as a political scientist - I appreciate this renaissance in justice as a driving category across disciplines, I also worry that this renaissance can preclude what other disciplines are really *for*. I agree with Nick that justice is a feature of every relationship, but it may not be the defining or central aspect. If we read literature, or participate in art, or theater, and all of these simply become a vehicle for conversations about justice, or - even worse - become largely utilitarian mediums for partisan or political commentary, we've suffered a real loss on the intrinsic nature of these activities. None of this is to say justice, as right relationship, should not be a constant partner, but by raising questions of art and history and music into a central, driving question about justice, I fear we lose what some might call the 'leading aspect' of these areas, reducing them to a medium for activism, rather than their full worth.

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