



# 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](http://www.globalfacultyinitiative.net)

Preview Response

## **WE CAN FLOURISH IN ADVERSITY, SICKNESS ,AND DYING**

Lydia Dugdale

Professor of Medicine and Director, Columbia Center for Clinical Medical Ethics  
Associate Director of Clinical Ethics, NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital/Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons

---

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.

**For more information**

**[www.globalfacultyinitiative.net](http://www.globalfacultyinitiative.net)**