



# 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

**JUSTICE / PHYSICAL & BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES**

Thomas Chacko

Professor of Geology, Department of Earth & Atmospheric Sciences, University of Alberta

---

Justice: What follows are some stream of consciousness thoughts on Professor Wolterstorff's brief:

- I like the idea of subdividing justice into first- and second-order types. It strikes me that our fundamental calling as Christians is to establish, in a very bottom-up rather than top-down way, God's Kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven. Intrinsic to establishing the Kingdom is establishing first-order justice, i.e., treating all persons and indeed all Creation in such a way as to promote their/its best flourishing. If first-order justice is established, as it ultimately will be, there will be no need for second-order justice.
- I'm not sure I agree with Dr. Wolterstorff that the call to treat our students justly is 'pervasively' violated in academia. I suppose the veracity of that statement depends on the university and department that is being referred to and what exactly is meant by pervasive and justly. I was for 10 years the Associate Chair - Graduate in our department, which had/has approximately 150 graduate students. Although there certainly were some problem cases, my experience was that the large majority of supervisors treat their students justly or at least in a reasonable way. Having said that, I suspect all of us could do better. Christians in particular have a higher calling to envision graduate students and senior undergraduate students whom they supervise as their academic children rather than as a means to achieving their research goals. I have found that I need to be continually reminded of this ideal to strive for in my supervision, particularly when the pressures of research tempt me to view my students in a utilitarian way.

**For more information**

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