GFI Global Faculty Initiative

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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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LEADER GUIDE | JUSTICE MODULE 6 | JUSTICE IN THE ACADEMY

Session Objectives

1. To understand what it means to identify and uphold first-order justice throughout the interactions and institutions of the academy
2. To appraise the interactions which occur within the academy together with interactions between the academy and individuals or other institutions
3. To explore the pursuit of justice through academic involvements in the public sphere

Reading

Wolterstorff: Theology Brief - 'Justice in the Academy' (Justice and Rights, page 24) [14 minutes to read]

Summary

Wolterstorff insists that issues of justice and rights are highly salient to all academic contexts. He highlights the forms of interaction that occur primarily within an institution, through administration, teaching, scholarship and lab work, as well as interactions that engage organisations and individuals beyond an individual academic institution. Whatever the arena, Wolterstorff maintains that all forms of academic interactions should be appraised in terms of whether they advance justice or injustice. All areas of human interaction, including those within the academy, he says, are sites of first-order justice -- justice in our ordinary affairs. These interactions can include those between teachers and students; researchers and grant making bodies; mentors and mentees; authors and publishers; and those that occur within university administrative frameworks and scholarly societies.

Questions

Q1: Wolterstorff says, 'First-order justice pertains to how agents engage each other, how they interact. Teaching is an inherently interactive activity: teachers and students interacting with each other. Scholarship is inherently interactive: scholars interacting with other scholars in their discipline. Academic administration is inherently interactive: administrators interacting with faculty, students, and staff. Laboratory research is interactive. In all these interactions, we are called to act justly - and to

seek the wellbeing of our fellows and institutions in ways that go beyond what justice requires' (Justice and Rights, page 25). **What are the kinds of interactions that make up the majority of your working life? Reflecting on these interactions, to whom do you owe a duty or obligation? What does that duty or obligation entail?**

Leader prompts:

- Claudia Vanney identifies the work life of her interdisciplinary research activity as interactions which include duties or obligations. She writes: *'Interdisciplinary research demands a very particular and deep type of interaction between academics. Collaborative intellectual work requires a mutual appreciation and respect among the members of the research team to promote among them an attitude of openness that consolidates the desire to learn from others. These attitudes can only be developed in a climate of trust.'* (Justice and Rights, page 185)
- Have you witnessed manifest failures of scholars or academic institutions to provide the duty of care that Wolterstorff would consider a biblical ethic? Or, alternatively, have you witnessed exemplary models (individual or institutional) of good and praiseworthy care?

Q2: Wolterstorff lists many processes where we might consider questions of justice: *'recruitment of students and faculty, academic governance, scholarly publishing, academic societies, academic award-giving and academic promotion ... acknowledgements, attributions and citations, authorship, mentorship, collegial support, teaching and training'* (Justice and Rights, page 29). **Taking this broader view, how just are the core institutions of the academy as a whole, with special reference to those in which you are involved?**

Leader prompts:

- In her reflections on these questions, Dinesha Samararatne highlights injustices in academic publishing: *'The inequality in the distribution of intellectual, financial, and social resources have resulted in unjust conditions for academic publishing. It is near impossible for an academic in the global south (however understood) to publish in leading journals in her discipline, except as a matter of exception. Those exceptions are often personal to the academic, it is rarely a matter of institutional support. The exceptional circumstances almost always include supportive colleagues located elsewhere in the academy, often in well supported universities in the global north.'* (Justice and Rights, page 174). What might a just response to inequitable publishing opportunities look like at the institutional level?
- Academic research is often dependent on external funding. Wolterstorff writes: *'Agencies funding research must establish priorities on topics, research institutions, qualifications of researchers*

etc.' (Justice and Rights, page 30). The way such criteria are set can have a significant impact on the direction of academic research and who gets to participate. Are you aware of what you judge to be injustices in the setting of such priorities?

Q3: Academics' influence often reaches beyond the academy through work as consultants, traditional and social media commentators, or industry experts. Academics may also contribute to public commissions, law-making, and other areas of public life. **What responsibilities do academics have to act justly in their interactions with those beyond the academy, including in their roles as public intellectuals?**

Leader prompts:

- In his response, Osam Temple writes: *'Is our interest in justice aimed at building a good and moral society?...Is there no salvific or missional purpose to the Christian interest in justice'*? (Justice and Rights, page 51). What contribution can academics make to building a just, good and moral society? How far might we see an academic's concern for justice an element of Christian mission in the scholarly life and academy?
- Wolterstorff emphasizes issues of racism, sexism and sexual abuse within the academy. These issues may be identified in a range of interactions – between individuals, in the ways institutions act, and in interactions beyond the academy (Justice and Rights, page 25). Can you identify these issues within your own institution and academic field? How might Christian academics counter these injustices where they exist?

Further Questions

Wolterstorff lists challenging questions in his section 'The Scholarly Pursuit of Justice' (Justice and Rights, page 28).

On Research and Scholarship

- Is there any aspect of my current research, writing or academic performance where the question, 'Is it just'?, has salience? (e.g., in my scholarly agenda or method or theory I bring to bear on it)
- To what extent does my discipline in general, and my research topic in particular, incorporate interactions among people and/ or groups?
- What are the rights of the parties to those interactions (being studied? Doing the studying?)
- What might be the main sources of injustice in those interactions?
- What rules and institutions are in place to implement justice, in the sense of redressing wrongs, or

even better preventing those wrongs, occurring? Are they adequate to deliver justice?

- How far are the interactions mediated through (academic?) institutions, and what powers do those institutions have over persons? What ensures that they act justly?
- Are there just or unjust ways that my scholarly products may be applied or utilized?

On Academic Institutions

- To whom does the scholar in my field owe a duty or obligation? Within the academy and beyond the academy?
- Do my academic practices, or do academic practices in my discipline, give all persons their due, affirming and cultivating their excellence (e.g., in acknowledgements, attributions and citations, authorship, mentorship, collegial support, teaching and training)?
- In my experience, how just are the core institutions of the academy: recruitment of students and faculty, academic governance, scholarly publishing, academic societies, academic award-giving, academic promotion?
- In the interactional spaces of my scholarly field, where is there manifest injustice, i.e., a failure to express love through giving others their due, or enhancing the quality of their 'life-worlds'?

In Depth

Direct links to GFI scholar reflections on The Academy

Why questions of justice and rights should motivate Christian scholar (Justice and Rights, page 51) [Temple | Philosophy | Bakke Graduate U]

The Academy and Research Teams

Fostering creative pluralism through interdisciplinary research (Justice and Rights, page 185) [Vanney | Philosophy | Universidad Austral]

Challenges of interdisciplinary collaboration (Justice and Rights, page 185) [Vanney | Philosophy | Universidad Austral]

Inter-disciplinary research as first-order justice in the academy (Justice and Rights, page 186) [Vanney | Philosophy | Universidad Austral]

First-order justice is a pillar of trust in collaborative interdisciplinary research (Justice and Rights, page 186) [Vanney | Philosophy | Universidad Austral]

How to foster trust and justice in research teams (Justice and Rights, page 186) [Vanney | Philosophy | Universidad Austral]

Academic Publishing

First-order justice in the academy of the Global South (Justice and Rights, page 175) [Samararatne | Law | U of Colombo]

Unjust conditions in academic publishing in the Global South (Justice and Rights, page 174) [Samararatne | Law | U of Colombo]

Is the Global North obligated to repair injustices experienced by colleagues in the South? (Justice and Rights, page 174) [Samararatne | Law | U of Colombo]

The Academy and Public Life

Research on mass human rights violations as a Christian academic response to social injustice (Justice and Rights, page 131) [Jacob | International Relations | Australian National U]

On history's role in informing policy choices (Justice and Rights, page 179) [Glanville | International Relations | Australian National U]

On economic justice and redistribution research at the cross-section of history, economics and political science (Justice and Rights, page 69) [Sloman | History | U of Cambridge]

Justice in the remembering and retelling history of injustice (Justice and Rights, page 65); the genealogy of rights (Justice and Rights, page 61) [Coffey | History | U of Leicester]

What is the calling of Christian scholars in global governance (Justice and Rights, page 140) [Halliday | Sociology | American Bar Foundation]

How do academics in the Global South balance academic pursuits with activism? (Justice and Rights, page 174) [Samararatne | Law | U of Colombo]

What are the obligations of scholars in the pursuit of justice? (Justice and Rights, page 178) [Glanville | International Relations | Australian National U]

Should Christians scholars in economics, political theory, business and management, sociology and social work, health care, gender studies, etc., pursue research questions that do not speak explicitly to issues of justice and rights? (Justice and Rights, page 178) [Glanville | International Relations | Australian National U]

In favor of Christian scholars contributing on what is justice and how to combat injustice (Justice and Rights, page 178) [Glanville | International Relations | Australian National U]

Christian scholarly practice for the prevention of mass violations of human rights (Justice and Rights, page 134) [Jacob | International Relations | Australian National U]

Epistemic Justice in the Academy

Epistemic injustice as a failure to recognize neglected forms of traditional knowledge (Justice and Rights, page 182) [Gomez | Philosophy | U of Rosario]

In Latin America, traditional knowledge is deemed invalid, primitive, mythical and infantile (Justice and Rights, page 182) [Gomez | Philosophy | U of Rosario]

The promotion of epistemic justice (Justice and Rights, page 183) [Gomez | Philosophy | U of Rosario]

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