

A Vision of Flourishing



Yale Center for Faith & Culture
AT YALE DIVINITY SCHOOL

VITAL FAITH
SPEAKING TO
OUR TIME'S
VITAL NEEDS.



A Vision of Flourishing

A PASTOR pulls to the side of the road and starts scribbling notes. The months of pandemic preaching have worn her down, and her own sermons have begun to feel like ash on her tongue. But now the honest, earnest conversation on this podcast has helped her recover her voice. A dam has broken, and the words flow like a rushing river. A few tears hit the page, smudging the ink of her renewed message.

A YOUNG MAN hesitantly picks up the book his friend recommended. Faith has seemed less and less credible recently. It feels like the church offers either pop psychology platitudes or partisan rants aimed more at fighting a culture war than forming lives in Christ. He heard there might be something different in these pages. By midnight he still hasn't put the book down. He's starting to envision a faith he could really live, one that would meet the demands of his mind and the yearning of his heart.

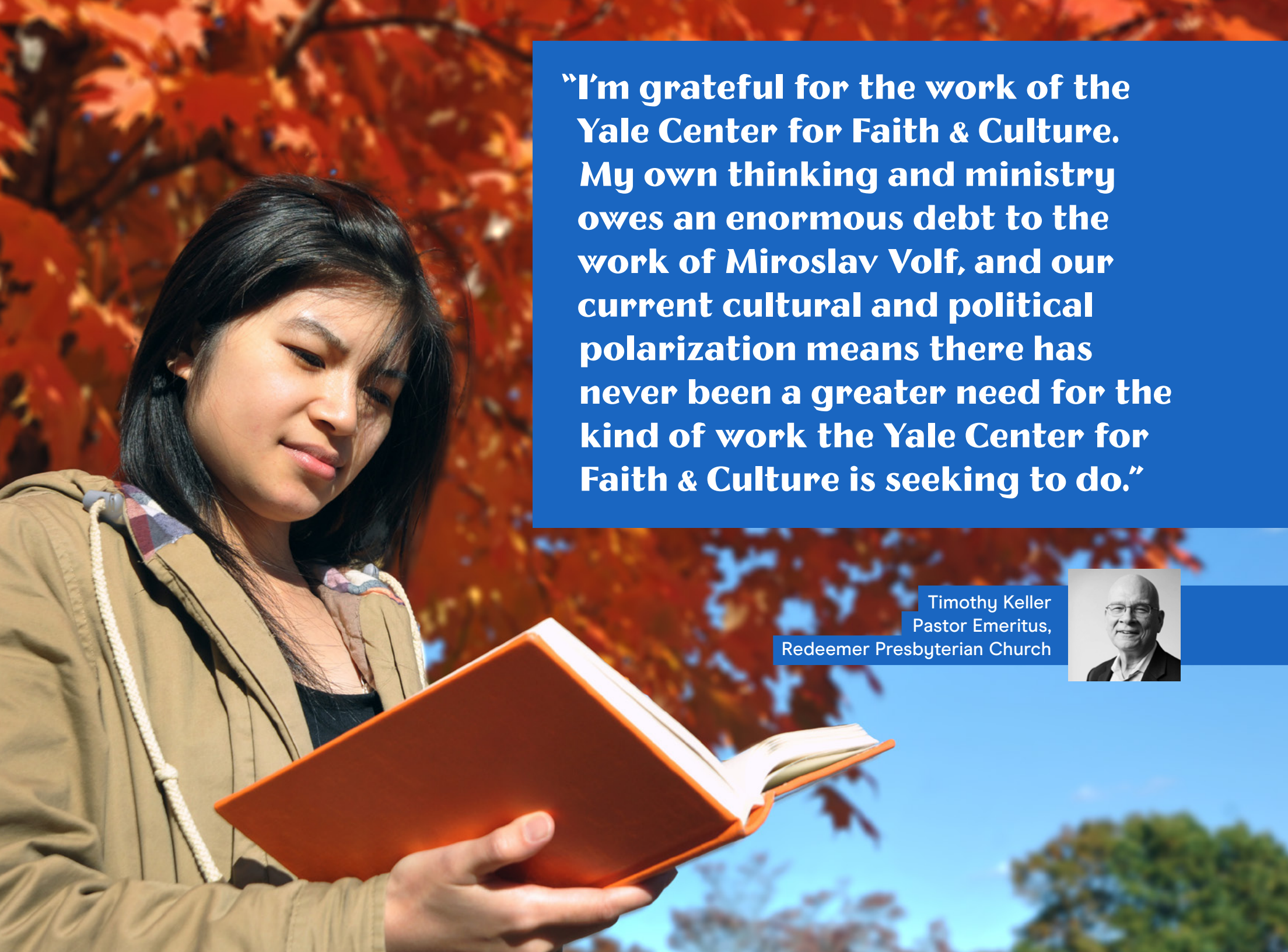
THE STUDENT listens intently as her professor looks around the table and asks: "If the claims in this reading were true, how would your life have to change?" There's a sharp intake of breath as the student leans back in her chair. Everyone has always told her that she could change the world. Nobody has challenged her to ask whether she should change *her life*. It's like the first blast of crisp morning air pouring through a newly opened window...

**The Yale Center for Faith & Culture
helps people envision and pursue
lives worthy of our humanity.**

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We articulate a Christ-centered vision of flourishing that speaks to perennial human questions and pressing cultural issues, and we foster truth-seeking conversations among the contending visions in our world today.



"I'm grateful for the work of the Yale Center for Faith & Culture. My own thinking and ministry owes an enormous debt to the work of Miroslav Volf, and our current cultural and political polarization means there has never been a greater need for the kind of work the Yale Center for Faith & Culture is seeking to do."

Timothy Keller
Pastor Emeritus,
Redeemer Presbyterian Church

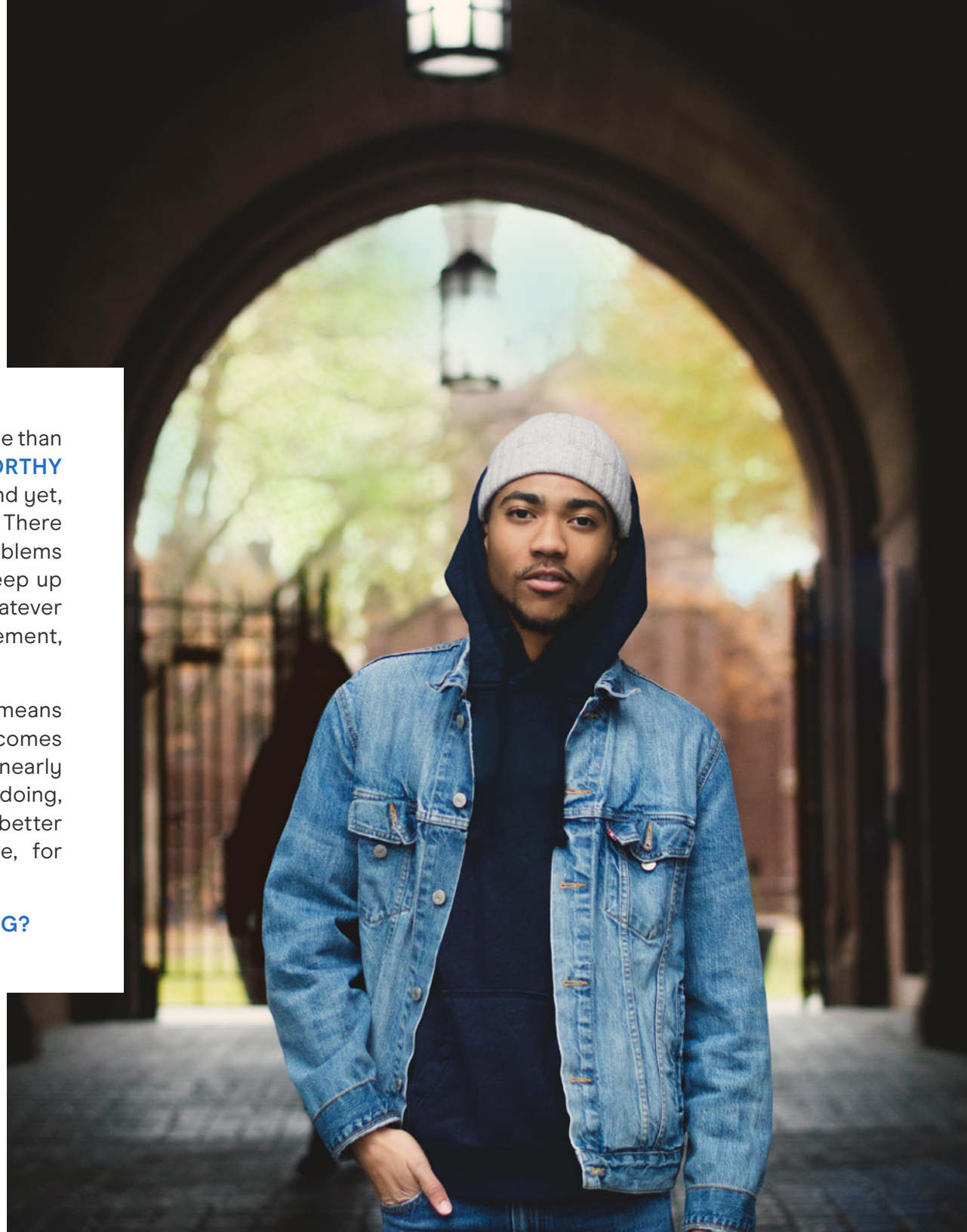


The Need of the Hour

No question is of deeper significance than this: **WHAT KIND OF LIFE IS WORTHY OF OUR SHARED HUMANITY?** And yet, we rarely pause to let its gravity sink in. There are too many tasks at hand, too many problems to be solved, too many competitors to keep up with. So we race ahead in pursuit of whatever goals we happen to have: success, achievement, recognition, happiness.

Inadvertently, we become experts in means but remain hesitant amateurs when it comes to ends. We can figure out *how* to do nearly anything. But do we know what is *worth* doing, what we ought to live *for*? We seek ever-better strategies for becoming more effective, for getting what we want more efficiently.

BUT IS WHAT WE WANT WORTH SEEKING?



Returning to the Pursuit of True Meaning

In 2019, the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at UCLA found that 49.8 percent of incoming college first-years rated “Developing a meaningful philosophy of life” as “essential” or “very important” to them.* When HERI first asked the question in 1967, the number was 82.9 percent.†

When we don’t take the time to ask—much less learn how to answer—the most important questions of our lives, we either drift rudderless on the sea or sail confidently towards destinations that will ultimately disappoint us. And when we don’t know how to have genuinely truth-seeking conversations about those questions, our common life becomes an incessant us-against-them conflict.

Our time needs...

- Higher education that unites intellectual rigor with personal transformation
- Churches that cultivate life-shaping faith in Jesus Christ
- Public discourse that seeks truth without sacrificing love
- Rigorous, honest scholarship that fosters wisdom and understanding

Now more than ever, we need intellectually cogent Christian voices speaking to the intersection of our culture’s urgent needs and the perennial questions of human life. And we need those voices to reach beyond the academic guild. We need to equip pastors, teachers, and ordinary Christians to discern and pursue lives shaped by the Gospel of Christ and worthy of our shared humanity.

To secure the future of this vital work at Yale Divinity School, we are ready to make a bold investment. Led by Miroslav Volf, the Yale Center for Faith & Culture (YCFC) is poised both to share our ideas, people, and intellectual resources with a wider community and to amplify our persuasive presence within the prestigious university we call home. Doing so will require \$4 million to ensure Yale’s continuing commitment to equip a leading Christian public intellectual with a team of publicly oriented scholars, innovative teachers, and media-savvy communicators to educate and inspire both the church and the world.

† Ellen Bara Stolzenberg et al., *The American Freshman: National Norms Fall 2019*, p. 46.

‡ Robert J. Panos et al., *National Norms for Entering College Freshmen: Fall 1967*, p. 34.

The Unique Vocation of Yale Divinity School

For over three hundred years, Yale has gathered and trained leading Christian voices for service in church and world. As the only Christian divinity school housed at a pluralistic Ivy League university, Yale Divinity School (YDS) is uniquely committed to offering the contributions of intellectually rigorous Christian faith to the conversations and debates of the broader academic culture.

Few other places in the United States situate theology so close to the cutting edge of the physical and social sciences, world-class professional schools, and leading non-religious approaches to the humanities.

SCHOLARSHIP THAT REACHES BEYOND THE ACADEMY

YDS has never been satisfied for academic theology to keep to itself. Yale scholars from H. Richard Niebuhr and Henri Nouwen to Letty Russell and Lamin Sanneh have influenced public discourse and deepened the faith of readers well beyond the academy. This YDS tradition of offering the fruit of serious theological scholarship to nourish church and world continues today in the work of Miroslav Volf.

Mission Statement of Yale Divinity School

Yale Divinity School has an enduring commitment to foster the knowledge and love of God through scholarly engagement with Christian traditions in a global, multifaith context.



“An investment in the Yale Center for Faith & Culture is an essential investment in the future of the church in society. Through its work, the Center continues to shape thought and action in the public square.”



Lisa Sharon Harper
President and Founder,
FreedomRoad



The Unique Voice of Miroslav Volf

Miroslav Volf is among the most celebrated theologians of our day. Raised in Tito's Yugoslavia in a Pentecostal family, his theology speaks out of specific experiences to open up a universal horizon. Volf calls on theologians to recognize their true vocation:

TO DISCERN, ARTICULATE, AND COMMEND VISIONS OF FLOURISHING IN LIGHT OF THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF JESUS CHRIST.

This theology offers a vision of the truth and beauty of life in a world of righteousness, peace, and joy—a world rescued from its self-endangerment and captivity to the power of sin by the love of God for us in Jesus Christ.

Educated in Croatia, the United States, and Germany, Volf speaks to a variety of academic and theological cultures. As a “theologian of the bridge,” he excels at forging connections across intellectual and religious divides and at drawing fruitful conversations out of entrenched disagreement. That makes him an especially needed presence in a theological academy and a wider public culture fractured by sharp divisions. Volf’s audience spans denominations, political parties, and the globe. His works have been translated into twelve languages, and he has spoken in dozens of countries across all six inhabited continents.

Despite the diminished standing of theology among academic disciplines today, Volf’s work inspires serious engagement from philosophers, sociologists, and psychologists, among others. Similarly, in a time when academic theology rarely receives a hearing among pastors, let alone lay Christians, Volf’s writings have reached wide audiences, especially among leaders and culture-shapers.

Honors & Awards

Miroslav Volf’s *Exclusion & Embrace* won the 2002 Grawemeyer Prize in Religion. *Christianity Today* named it one of the 100 most influential religious books of the 20th century.

Miroslav will deliver the prestigious Gifford Lectures at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland in 2024. Past honorees include Karl Barth, Reinhold Niebuhr, Iris Murdoch, and many other celebrated scholars.





**“Under Miroslav Volf’s vision,
the Yale Center for Faith &
Culture has embarked on
an exciting path toward
A Vision of Flourishing, a
vision of abundant beauty
and resounding justice.”**

Makoto Fujimura
Artist



Haejin Shim Fujimura
Attorney-Advocate



The Unique Vision of the Yale Center for Faith & Culture

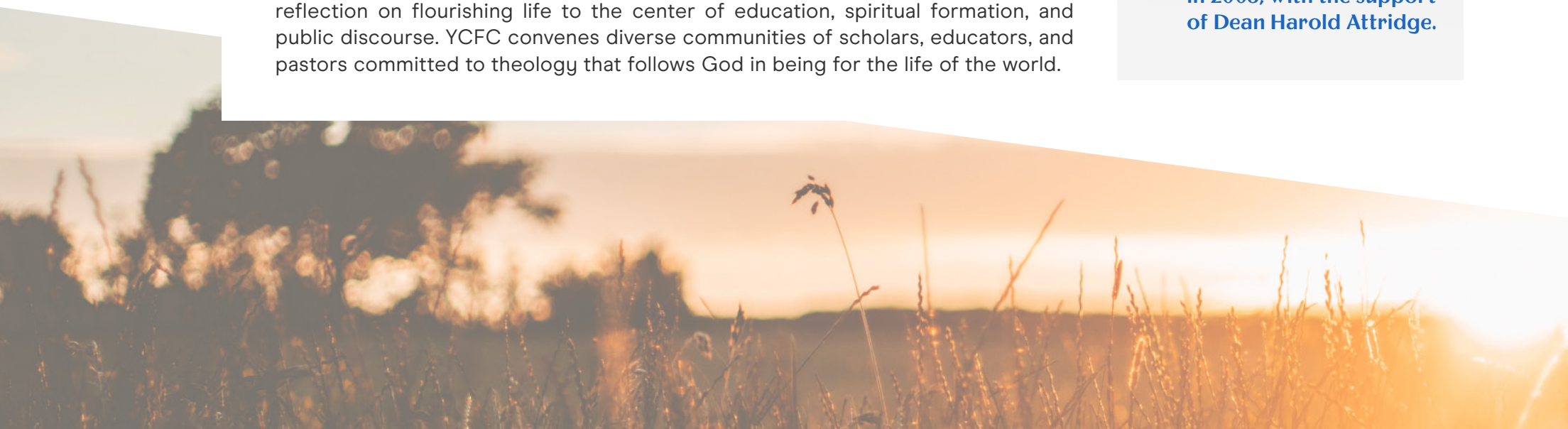
Punditry—even wise, faithful, gracious punditry—is not enough. We need a renewal of our minds that contributes to spiritual revitalization. And for that, the lone voice of even the best public intellectual is insufficient. (Ultimately, no human work is fully sufficient, but that does not excuse us from the task.) Deep renewal comes about through interdisciplinary communities of scholars gathered around a common vision and working for a common cause.

That's why Miroslav Volf founded the Yale Center for Faith & Culture. And that's why the full impact of his work requires a well-funded, fully-staffed YCFC.

YCFC's purpose is to help people envision and pursue lives worthy of our humanity. Led by Volf, YCFC's team of publicly oriented scholars, innovative teachers, and media-savvy communicators develops and disseminates resources that bring deep reflection on flourishing life to the center of education, spiritual formation, and public discourse. YCFC convenes diverse communities of scholars, educators, and pastors committed to theology that follows God in being for the life of the world.

The Origin of YCFC

In 1995, Prof. David Kelsey edited a report assessing the mission of YDS and its place at Yale. One need the report identified was an outwardly oriented Center to engage the pressing social and cultural issues of our day with the resources of theological scholarship. In response to that need, Miroslav Volf founded YCFC in 2003, with the support of Dean Harold Attridge.



The Significance of This Campaign

Over its nineteen-year history, YCFC has developed a truly distinctive, valuable expertise in teaching and collaborative theological scholarship. In 2022, we are prepared (a) to continue expanding our impact and (b) to anchor our financial future through three initiatives:

1. Deepened partnership with key patrons and supporters
2. A growing base of sustaining givers who enter their relationship with YCFC through social media and email marketing
3. Carefully selected grant proposals to grant-making foundations who know the quality of our scholarly output and the value of our faculty and collaborators

This threefold strategy will prepare the soil for a season of robust growth in programs, outreach, and impact. It will mean thousands of students at Christian colleges learning to see Christ in a way that makes a real difference in their lives and world through the **CHRIST & FLOURISHING** initiative. It will mean thousands more at pluralistic institutions having the chance to wrestle with life's deepest questions in dialogue with great philosophical and religious traditions through the **LIFE WORTH LIVING** initiative.

It will mean a theological movement providing wise reflection on how to live faithfully before God and with each other in this moment. It will mean more graduate fellows trained to speak to church and world on the questions that matter most. It will mean collaborations with church communities to put flourishing life in Christ at the center of spiritual formation. It will mean timely media offerings on a variety of platforms that elevate public discourse and enact a better way to live together and disagree with one another: seeking the truth in love. It will mean vital faith speaking to our time's vital needs.

The Moment of Opportunity

In conjunction with Yale University's *For Humanity* campaign, we aspire to raise \$4 million by 2023 to realize the vision of this plan and resource the next five years of the Yale Center for Faith & Culture's work.



Building a Movement

YCFC has collaborated with over 300 scholars at over 100 institutions from around the world.

YCFC's courses have been adapted at 17 other colleges and universities, serving thousands of students.



Yale Center for Faith & Culture

Gift Opportunities: 2022–2023

Cast a Vision of Flourishing		\$1,000,000
— Miroslav Volf's Next Chapter	Resource the next five years of Miroslav Volf's groundbreaking scholarship and public intellectual work.	\$540,000
— Named Deputy Director	Sponsor a three-year term for a rising academic leader's work to grow the breadth and depth of YCFC's impact.	\$460,000
Equip Christians for Discerning Lives of Faith		\$960,000
— Christ-Centered Flourishing in Christian Higher Education	Inspire a generation of students with resources developed at YCFC. Bring transformative courses to more than a thousand new students on dozens of campuses over five years.	\$835,000
— For the Life of the World Podcast	Make possible three fifty-episode seasons of a show about seeking and living lives worthy of our humanity. Over 225,000 downloads since its April 2020 launch.	\$125,000
Foster Truth-Seeking Conversations		\$960,000
— Life Worth Living at Yale	Double the reach of this life-shaping educational initiative to 240 or more students per year.	\$710,000
— New Podcast: Life Worth Living	Help create the first three seasons to bring the transformative insights of Life Worth Living to the listening public.	\$250,000
Build a Movement		\$1,080,000
— A Sustainable Hub	Secure YCFC's capacity to perform the core operations that make a movement possible.	\$620,000
— Forming Early Career Public Intellectuals	Fund a new two-year postdoctoral fellowship for two young scholars to learn with YCFC and take what they learn to posts at other institutions.	\$320,000
— Equipping Graduate Students to Serve Church & World	Provide five student fellows per year with formative experiences they take with them to campuses and congregations around the world.	\$140,000
Total		\$4,000,000
— Special Legacy Opportunity: Named Center for Faith & Culture	A naming gift would bring the Yale Center for Faith & Culture into the distinguished circle of academic institutes that can promote their work with the association of a supporting philanthropist and patron.	\$TBD

“Faced with widespread and damaging confusion about faith and public life, we need fresh wisdom, rigorously researched and widely applied. Under Miroslav Volf’s inspirational leadership, the Yale Center for Faith & Culture is ideally placed to address this challenge and deserves enthusiastic support.”



N. T. Wright
Emeritus Professor, University of Saint Andrews
Senior Research Fellow, Wycliffe Hall, Oxford



A Vision of Flourishing

THE REVITALIZED PASTOR steps to the pulpit, lifts her voice, and speaks a word of life to her community.

THE YOUNG MAN AND HIS FRIEND have been meeting weekly for six months now to talk about faith, life, and their biggest questions. Over time, more friends have joined, drawn by the prospect of a faith that is not only credible but livable.

THE NEWLY INSPIRED STUDENT slowly exhales and gathers herself. “Everything,” she says quietly. “Everything would change.”

FRIENDS,

We at the Yale Center for Faith & Culture presently find ourselves engrossed in planning our work together in coming years and ensuring that we have resources to do so with excellence worthy of our collective vocation. This is an exciting moment for me personally. I believe wholeheartedly in this vision, this work, and this team. What we do, what we have built, and what continues to grow at YCFC matters to me personally because it matters for the world. That's why I am eager to seek and find partners who share my commitment and will support our work.

None of us can see the future. What lies in store is only God's to know. I do know, however, that my energy and passion for our work at YCFC is as intense as ever. I have no plans for imminent retirement. I can imagine—I *do imagine*—another two decades or more of work. Even so, I also have an eye towards what will remain once I have put down my pen.

That is one reason why I have invested so deeply in collaborative work with the YCFC team and with various students over the years. Any theological approach of true value must extend well beyond the work of an individual. It is my hope that we are not just forming individual bearers of our vision but inspiring a movement that will shape generations (plural!) of scholars and ministers. Regardless of what institutional forms it might take in the future, the work will continue. The legacy of this moment will endure.

I am at risk of letting my enthusiasm get the better of me, so I will close here. I hope you share this enthusiasm and will join us in pursuit of a vision of flourishing.

Sursum Corda—**HEARTS UP!**

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Miroslav Volf". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

Miroslav Volf
Director, Yale Center for Faith & Culture
Henry B. Wright Professor of Systematic Theology, Yale Divinity School

Join Us

Because we believe in this vision and the difference it will make for pastors, students, young people, the church, and the world, we invite you to join us in realizing it.

For more information on how you can give, or for any questions you have, contact Yale Divinity School Senior Director of Alumni Engagement and Development, Barbara Sabia (barbara.sabia@yale.edu).





Yale Center for Faith & Culture
AT YALE DIVINITY SCHOOL



for Humanity
THE YALE CAMPAIGN

Yale Center for Faith & Culture

409 PROSPECT STREET, NEW HAVEN, CT 06511
FAITH.YALE.EDU/GIVE
FAITH@YALE.EDU

Appendix: Campaign Goals & Outputs

Note: The following details correspond with the table of gift opportunities on page 13.

1A. MIROSLAV VOLF'S NEXT CHAPTER

What it funds:

- 2 one-semester research leaves, which are crucial for advancing cutting-edge intellectual projects.
- 5 summers of research (complemented by existing grant funding).
- Associated overhead.

What it accomplishes:

- 2–3 books with lasting impact in academic theology and church life.
- Complementary lectures, podcast appearances, articles, videos, and other media.
- Volf's works are among the most influential in theology today.

1B. NAMED DEPUTY DIRECTOR

What it funds:

- Compensation expenses for deputy director position and associated overhead for three years.

What it accomplishes:

- Secures YCFC's strategic and operational leadership to ensure that YCFC pursues its mission effectively.
- Leadership for YCFC's ongoing development activities.
- 1–2 books (authored or co-authored).
- 1 course taught per year at Yale College or Yale Divinity School.
- Lectures, public seminars, and podcast appearances.
- Strategic guidance for YCFC's self-presentation.



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2A. CHRIST-CENTERED FLOURISHING IN CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

What it funds:

- Fellowship for instructors at Christian institutions of higher education.
- 10 fellows in year 1, growing to 14 in year 5.
- 5 course-development grants per year.
- Annual meeting for fellows and other participating and interested faculty.
- Marketing and communications for “Christ and Being Human” teaching network.
- Partial support for Associate Research Scholar to direct the program at YCFC.
- Associated overhead.

What it accomplishes:

- 25–55 new courses using the “Christ and Being Human Approach” at colleges, universities, seminaries, and divinity schools.
- 1,000–2,200 students taught within five years, with continuing impact as courses are retaught throughout instructors’ careers.
- Note: Pilot data show significant impact of courses on students’ sense of meaning in life (using the validated Meaning in Life Questionnaire measure) and intellectual humility.

2B. FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD PODCAST

What it funds:

- All production expenses and associated staff costs for 3 years.
- Associated overhead.

What it accomplishes:

- 3 seasons of 50 episodes each.
- 150,000–300,000 total downloads per season.
- Note: For the Life of the World currently has 4.9/5 stars on Apple Podcasts (137 reviews).

3A. LIFE WORTH LIVING AT YALE

What it funds:

- 50% funding for Life Worth Living program director at YCFC for 5 years.
- Life Worth Living teacher training for 12 graduate students per year for 5 years.
- 1 additional lecturer to teach a section of Life Worth Living each year for 5 years.
- All course expenses for Life Worth Living (HUMS 411) and Education and the Life Worth Living (HUMS 065) for 5 years.

(Continued on next page)

What it accomplishes:

- 14 sections of Life Worth Living courses each academic year.
- ~240 students per year, reaching over 1/5 of Yale College student body during their enrollment.
- 12 graduate student instructors trained per year. A significant portion of these students will teach Life Worth Living at other institutions during their careers.
- Note: Data collected in 2020 showed significant impact of Life Worth Living at Yale on students' sense of meaning in life (using the validated Meaning in Life Questionnaire measure) compared to a control group.

3B. NEW PODCAST: LIFE WORTH LIVING

What it funds:

- Co-sponsorship for a major new show produced in partnership with a professional podcast network.
- Associated YCFC staff and overhead expenses.

What it accomplishes:

- 3 seasons of Life Worth Living podcast. Episode total TBD.
- Projected reach of 10,000+ downloads per episode.

4A. A SUSTAINABLE HUB

What it funds:

- Half-time administrative position at YCFC for 5 years.
- Logistics, materials, and core operational expenses for 5 years.
- Fundraising expenses (CRM, print materials, travel to meetings, etc.) for 5 years.
- Associated overhead.

What it accomplishes:

- Provides a foundation of administrative and operational capabilities to make possible the rest of our work.



4B. FORMING EARLY-CAREER PUBLIC INTELLECTUALS

What it funds:

- 2 two-year post-doctoral fellowships at Yale.
- Associated overhead.

What it accomplishes:

- 2 promising young scholars formed in YCFC's approach to theology and public engagement. Fellows will take this formation with them to future employment (hopefully in tenure-track positions at other universities, colleges, or seminary/divinity schools).
- Note: The fellowship could be named (within the strictures of Yale named-gift policies).

4C. EQUIPPING GRADUATE STUDENTS TO SERVE CHURCH & WORLD

What it funds:

- Wages for 3 student fellows per year.
- Associated overhead.

What it accomplishes:

- Promising students are formed in YCFC's approach to theology and public engagement. Fellows will take this formation with them to future employment.
- Note: Former YCFC fellows have gone on to serve as clergy at a variety of churches, as well as to faculty, post-doctoral, and leadership roles at:
 - » Cornell University
 - » Gannon University (PA)
 - » George Fox University (OR)
 - » Princeton University Center for Human Values
 - » St. Paul's School (NH)
 - » Southern Methodist University (TX)
 - » University of Notre Dame
 - » The Veritas Forum
- Note: Former masters-level YCFC fellows have gone on to doctoral programs at:
 - » Baylor University
 - » Duke University
 - » Princeton University
 - » Vanderbilt University
 - » Yale University