

# Theology at YDS: A Bicentennial Retrospective

Excerpts from an exhibit at the Yale Divinity Library, October 2022–March 2023. Italicized text is from *“This Grand Errand”: A Bicentennial History of Yale Divinity School* (YDS, 2022) by Ray Waddle.

## Setting the stage

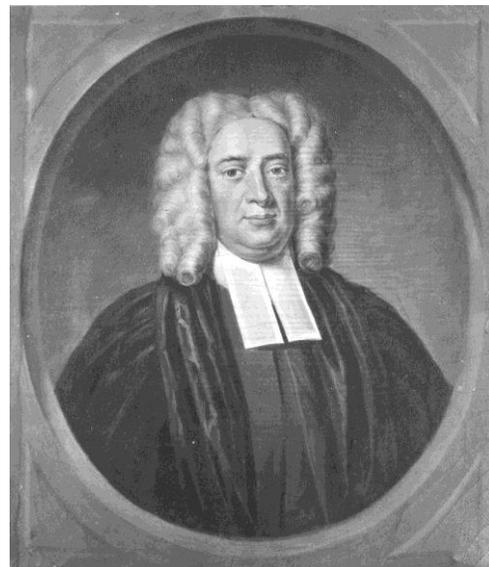


*In the seventeenth-century wilderness of the newly colonized American continent, it was obvious to many that Southern New England needed a theological bulwark that would uphold Christian Protestant orthodoxy, produce a learned clergy, and promote civil training. These goals were tied together. Life for the newly arrived colonists demanded competent civic rule and fearless faith in the Lord to see it through.*

*An old story—fueled perhaps by school rivalry as much as regional history—says Yale was founded in order to correct Harvard’s wayward theological liberalism and ensure the future of Calvinist orthodoxy. But there’s no need to explain Yale’s genesis with reference to spectral doctrinal deviations elsewhere. Conditions in colonial Connecticut were enough to warrant a college closer to home. Boston was too far away. The settlements of Connecticut needed their own fount of learning to ensure the formation of a disciplined clergy and competent magistrates. One assumption held firm: any such college would be solidly Reformed Protestant in the Puritan mold.*

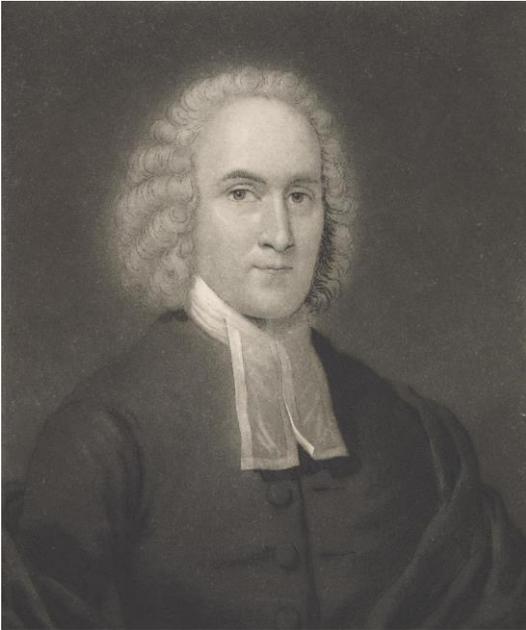
Not long after Yale was established in New Haven, a theological controversy arose:

*The first rumblings happened around a theme that hounds every theological school at one time or another: the curriculum. Distress arose over those very books that Yale’s trustees had so gratefully received from across the sea. Some of them were considered heterodox—either too Anglican for Calvinist New England, or too secular for impressionable young Christian students. An imbroglio centered on Yale’s first New Haven resident rector, Timothy Cutler.*



Timothy Cutler

*Taking the position in 1719, Cutler was a noted linguist, rhetorician, and geographer, as well as Congregational minister. Soon it became clear that the ideas he was encountering in the school's new library collection were moving him toward an Anglican theology, away from Calvinism. This posed a problem for Puritan-minded Yale. A sense of unease was already haunting New England's denizens, a feeling that the Calvinist rectitude of the Mayflower generation was passing away. And now the head of Yale itself, along with a group of Yale tutors, was doubting the legitimacy of their Congregational ordination. The "Great Apostasy" was on. By 1722, Cutler was dismissed as rector....*



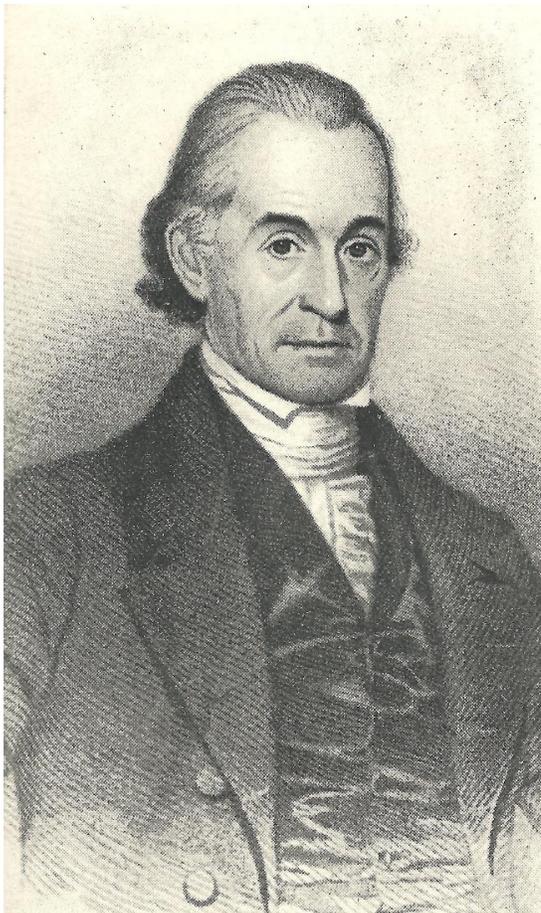
*Witnessing these thunderous years, first as a Yale student, then tutor, then as a towering New England minister, was a singular personality who became colonial America's greatest theologian, Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758). The Great Awakening roused New England starting in 1734, and engulfed Yale too. Its effect on America was far-reaching, establishing an evangelical style that remains a hallmark of national piety. Establishment Calvinism in New England was suddenly on a collision course with a freewheeling, free-will brand of Protestantism.*

*Repercussions for theological education were felt everywhere. Later, the new Yale Divinity School would forge a theology meant to avoid errors of excess left and right in a post-revolutionary era steeped in revivalism.*

*From his pulpit in Northampton, Jonathan Edwards stressed the eternal stakes of salvation, preparing the ground for the first "surprising conversions" that swept through his congregation in 1734, a revival that extended up and down the Connecticut River Valley... Over the next decade, as the revivals harvested converts and also generated a welter of divisiveness, Edwards became the Awakening's chief sympathetic interpreter. He was critical of the revivals' emotional excesses but defended the overall results: the "holy affections" at work shattered a colonial spiritual torpor and showed signs of changed hearts, love of others, and divine grace.*

## 1822: YDS is established

For the first century or more of Yale's existence, the study of theology was incorporated into the general curriculum and ministers typically began their professional service after an apprentice period of working and studying with established clergy. The notion of a professional ministerial school separate from the college wouldn't exist in the Western world until the 19th century. In 1822, fifteen Yale College students petitioned administrators to allow them to stay on and further pursue divinity studies. A new "Theological Department" with separate funding and faculty was established in 1822.



### **"New Haven Theology"**

*When Yale Divinity School opened in 1822, it hired Nathaniel William Taylor from Center Church, a short walk across the Green, to set the program in motion. By choosing Taylor, the new school embraced a theology that immediately went to battle in a regional war of ideas. The New Haven Theology was a liberalized orthodox Calvinism that became synonymous with Taylor—a "progressive orthodoxy" that navigated between traditionalist doctrine and New England Unitarianism. Yale's new Theological Department would be its flagship for three decades. Taylor's influence can hardly be exaggerated in the School's first thirty years. The formation of YDS was considered "the most significant event in the history of Trinitarian theological ideas in the U.S. from 1780 to 1840," and New Haven Theology—"Taylorism"—produced the most innovative systematic theology of the nineteenth century.*

### **Nathaniel William Taylor**

#### **Dwight Professor of Didactic Theology 1822–1858**

Taylor was born in 1786 and graduated from Yale College in 1807. He studied theology under Timothy Dwight, was ordained, and became the minister of the First Church of New Haven in 1812. He was the first professor appointed by Yale Divinity School, serving until his death in 1858.

1831- (15)  
March 6<sup>th</sup> Having been advised by Dr Taylor  
after reading the life & writings of Mrs Swell-  
determined to keep a journal & keep it faith-  
fully - Two weeks ago last Friday having  
been affectionately conversed with by <sup>Chapin</sup>  
a classmate on the subject of religion - by  
the blessing of God was enabled to make a  
resolution to attend faithfully to the subject  
conversed with Mr Goodrich that morn - &  
I humbly trust followed his advise. attended  
an enquiry meeting that eve - was under  
deep convictions - The next morn. visited  
Dr Taylor & hope that I was & am willing  
to give up all for Christ - Have since had  
many dark hours - but through the mercy  
of God have been blessed with more enjoy-  
ment during the last two weeks than I  
ever had before - This morn - (Sunday) <sup>(Constitutional</sup>  
day) Mr Pitcher preach'd from Hebrews 1. 3<sup>d</sup> - to the  
church - when we came to leave after the service  
my heart ached to think how long I had kept my  
self from that blessed privilege & determined to exert

Giving a sense of the theological tenor at YDS in its early years, this manuscript journal was written by a Yale College student from March 6 through June 18, 1831. The author is likely John Crump (1814–1835), of New London, Connecticut, who graduated from Yale College in 1833. Crump began his journal at the suggestion of Prof. Nathaniel William Taylor. Throughout, Crump mentions Taylor and other professors and administrators in the College, who are encouraging a general revival of religion going on in the town and among the students.

Donated to the Yale Divinity School Library Special Collections by Kenneth P. Minkema in honor of the Divinity School's bicentennial in 2022.

[Part V. Doctrines of Revelation Continued.]

Feb. 16, 1853.

Revealed Theology.  
Moral Government of God as presented by  
Revelation - by N. W. Taylor S. T. D.

To unfold to man God's moral government, <sup>with its attendant interest</sup> ~~with~~ the great design of revelation. So this all other objects were subservient. I propose to consider -

I. First. The fact that God is administering a moral gov. 1. God gives a law to man as an expression of the lawgiver's will. (2) as equitable (3) as an authoritative rule of action.

Second, God declares himself as a moral governor.

In the Garden of Eden - On Mt. Sinai. Also Lev. 18 chap. He here appeals to his character. In each command claim is made to his rightful supremacy.

Third. The same is evident from the Biblical history of his providential government, (Always subservient to his ~~providential~~ moral government.) (1) Condition of first parents in Eden. (2) Flood, ~~showing~~ God's displeasure at sin. (3) Confusion of tongues. (4) Calling of Abraham. This is said to be the gospel presented to Abraham.

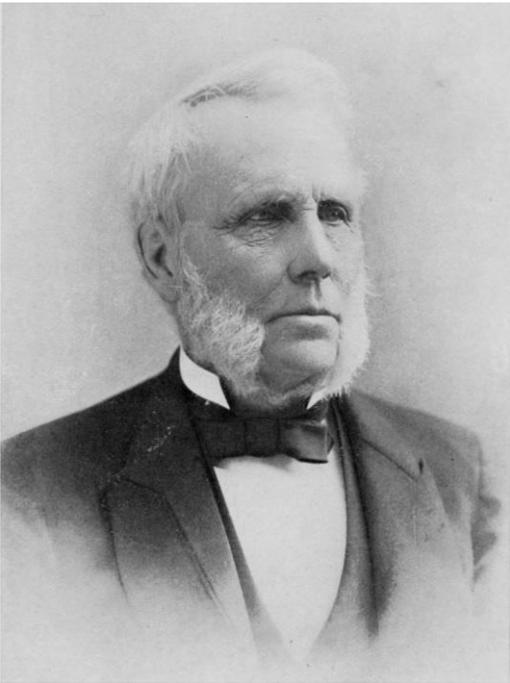
Fourth. The account given of man's constitution & character shows the same thing.

The first page of a YDS student's notebook from 1853, with notes on a Nathaniel Taylor lecture.

From the [Stephen Fenn Papers](#), RG 30, Special Collections, Yale Divinity Library

## Samuel Harris

### Dwight Professor of Systematic Theology 1871–1895



After a gap of more than a decade, Nathaniel Taylor was succeeded by Samuel Harris who was formerly the president of Bowdoin College. In his book *Yale and the Ministry*, Roland Bainton wrote that “In theology Harris was not a path breaker. His task was to teach the fundamentals, not to be startling. From Taylor he derived his faith in the moral government of the universe. From Bushnell he appropriated the blending of the natural and supernatural. With Wordsworth he saw God immanent in Nature. Like his great predecessors he combined the diverse strands in modern Christianity...”

*Harris’s YDS lectures to the junior class became a widely circulated book, **Philosophical Basis of Theism**, which was popular also in England and Japan.*

## Douglas Clyde Macintosh

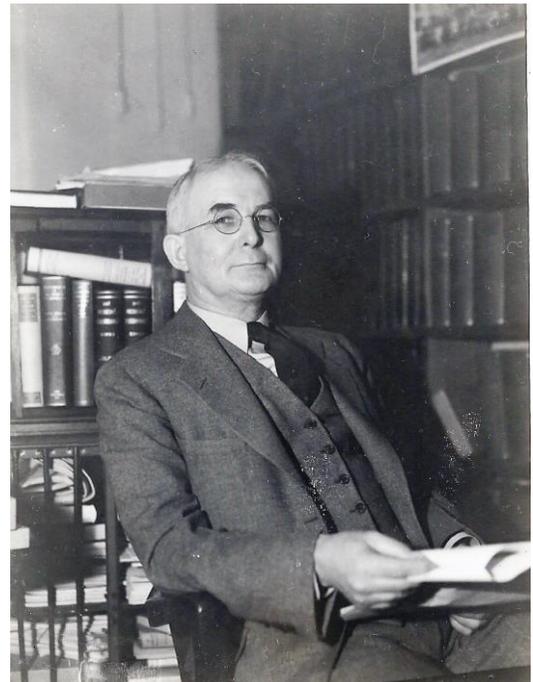
### Dwight Professor of Theology and Philosophy of Religion

The next major figure in theology at YDS was Douglas Clyde Macintosh, who taught from 1909 to 1942.

*Historian Roland Bainton places Macintosh, a Canadian Baptist, in the tradition of Jonathan Edwards for seeking fruitful connections between religious belief, natural science, and moral philosophy.*

*For a generation Macintosh synthesized Enlightenment ideas with his own ancestral pietism. The list of students Macintosh mentored was formidable, including H. Richard Niebuhr, Reinhold Niebuhr, Randolph Crump Miller, and Robert Lowry Calhoun.*

*“It is not too much to say that he put YDS on the theological map for several generations of theological thinkers,” said YDS Professor Julian N. Hartt (1940 PhD), looking back on Macintosh’s legacy.*



Macintosh’s papers ([Record Group 50](#)) are held at the Yale Divinity Library.

**Robert Lowry Calhoun**  
**Pitkin Professor of Historical Theology;**  
**Sterling Professor of Historical Theology**



On the YDS faculty from 1923 to 1965, church historian Robert Calhoun (1918 BD, 1923 PhD) became a national legend for his prodigious knowledge of the history of Christian thought. Some students took his course twice for the experience of absorbing so much church history. He was hailed as a nonpartisan guide to the history of doctrine who managed to harmonize liberal historical criticism with Christian traditionalism.

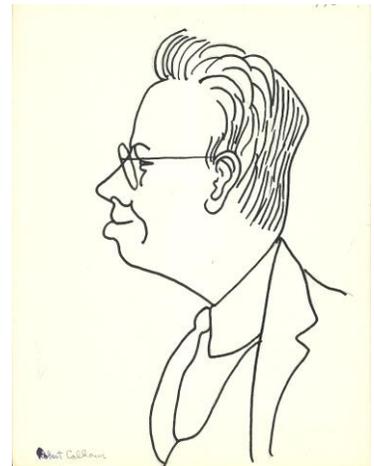
*“His theological teaching was above all else generous, confident that divine grace and human reflection belonged together and that the revelation of God in Christ was no stranger to this world, for the universe was providentially led, and human history was never, even in the instances of the greatest follies, completely devoid of the reflection of the divine light,”* said Yale colleague Hans Frei.

Calhoun’s papers ([Record Group 326](#)) are held at the Yale Divinity Library.

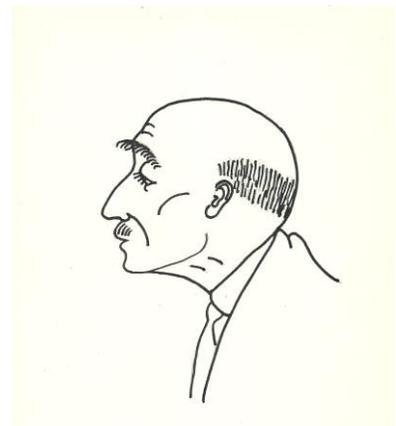
Caricatures of early 20<sup>th</sup> century YDS theologians by their YDS colleague Roland Bainton:



Douglas Clyde Macintosh



Robert Lowry Calhoun



H. Richard Niebuhr

**H. Richard Niebuhr**  
**Dwight Professor of Philosophy and Christian Ethics**  
**Sterling Professor of Theology and Christian Ethics**

Helmut Richard Niebuhr, another YDS graduate, joined the faculty in 1931 and taught philosophy, theology, and ethics until his death in 1962.

*Niebuhr embodied the anguished search for a faithful response to the times. He and his older brother Reinhold (1915 BD) were crucial thinkers in the 1930s in their own distinctive ways. H. Richard Niebuhr, eventually the Sterling Professor of Theology and Christian Ethics, pondered the meaning of the sovereignty of God, the ever-changing historical conditions of church and society, and ethical principles in light of Christian revelation.*

*Many graduates remembered H. Richard Niebuhr with affection—his detailed notes on the papers they submitted, his dramatic presence in the classroom, the way he would gaze “out the window with his blue eyes toward East Rock” while delivering a lecture.*



**The “Neo-orthodox” decades**

*“Neo-orthodoxy”—a coinage that didn’t satisfy everyone—was an umbrella term for a group of Protestant theologies, many fueled by the arguments of Karl Barth and Emil Brunner or a return to the works of Jonathan Edwards, that sought to move beyond a naïve nineteenth-century optimism that had become discredited in the wreckage and shame of World War I. From the 1930s to the 1950s, YDS was often associated with the neo-orthodox movement, though few faculty self-identified with the term, and others thought its influence at YDS was exaggerated. Neo-orthodoxy revived Reformation notions of sin and grace but had a contemporary tenor: it valued democratic ideals and ecumenism and opposed totalitarianism and anti-Semitism. At YDS, H. Richard Niebuhr’s classroom drew generations of future theologians and clergy who tried to come to terms with the paradox of divine love and justice, the mandates of scripture, and the fragility of human institutions.*

## The “Theological Discussion Group” at Yale

Various YDS professors were members of the influential Theological Discussion Group, which began in 1934 and continued into the early 1960s. Many of the most prominent American theologians of this time period participated in the Group meeting twice yearly, first at the Yale Divinity School and later in Washington, D.C. The stated intent of the Group as it formed in 1934 was “to hold a series of two week-end 'retreat discussions' during the coming academic year in some relatively secluded place where we could engage in a full, frank and leisurely exchange of ideas...The aim of the discussion will be to discover what is essential and distinctive in the Christian gospel for today.”

In her article “The Theological Discussion Group and Its Impact on American and Ecumenical Theology, 1920–1945” *Church History* (January 1, 1993), Heather A. Warren wrote: “Discussion about theological developments in the United States during the 1930s and 1940s has focused on the influence of European ‘crisis theology’ and Reinhold Niebuhr. This approach, however, has overlooked the cooperative work carried out by the theologians and churchmen who pushed American Protestant thought towards neo-orthodoxy. At the core of this movement stood a group of young theologians who shared a generational identity, having known each other as student leaders in the YMCA, Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions (SVM), and the World's Student Christian Federation (WSCF).”

Yale participants in this Group that met regularly at YDS included Roland Bainton, Robert Calhoun, H. Richard Niebuhr, and Liston Pope.

### ESCHATOLOGY

#### III. KINGDOM OF GOD AND ESCHATOLOGY (SOCIAL GOSPEL AND BARTHIANISM).

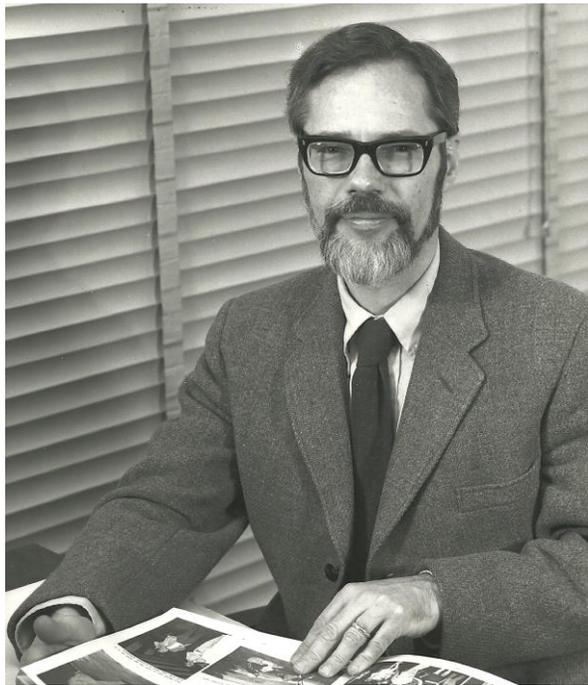
By H. Richard Niebuhr

The problem assigned in the title given above has baffled me. What is it that the committee wants me to discuss? Here are four unknown quantities, meaning many different things in different contexts. I suspect that the question is a very simple one, like "Who chased whom-around the walls of what?" to which I could return an unambiguous answer if I only knew the story to which the question referred; But my education has failed to provide me with the key; I can remember the walls of Jericho but no chase connected with them; I recall a story about the pursuit of Absalom but there aren't any walls in that account; so there's something in my mind about Kingdom of God and eschatology in the social gospel, but Barthianism doesn't fit into that, etc. etc. Hence I must set myself a problem which is intelligible to me and, since I can't speak of what I'm asked to talk about, tell another story to disguise my ignorance.

An excerpt of a paper delivered by H. Richard Niebuhr at the March 1941 meeting of the Theological Discussion Group at YDS

From the [Theological Discussion Group Records, RG 43](#), Yale Divinity Library

## George A. Lindbeck Pitkin Professor of Historical Theology



Lindbeck was the successor of Robert Calhoun as Pitkin Professor of Historical Theology. He received his BD from YDS in 1946 and joined the faculty after receiving his PhD in 1955. He taught until 1993 and is remembered for major contributions in two arenas—ecumenism and postliberal theology. His work *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (1984) started an international conversation. Series III of Lindbeck’s extensive personal papers held at the Divinity Library ([Record Group 172](#)) consists of materials related to *The Nature of Doctrine* - responses to the book by others, and Lindbeck's responses to the responses.

*Raised by Lutheran missionary parents in China, Lindbeck saw the importance of inter-denominational dialogue. “When Catholicism opened up to the larger world, George Lindbeck was there to welcome and embrace Catholics, not only for the Lutheran Church but for YDS,” Dean Gregory E. Sterling later said.*

*Margaret Farley recalled: “A very gentle person, and a searcher of truth, he respected and even revered the faith and hope in all of the major Christian traditions. And his teaching was reflected in his similar respect and care for his students.”*

From 1962 to 1964 Lindbeck was a Delegated Observer of the Vatican Council in Rome. In 1966 he published an important essay in *Challenge and Response: A Protestant Perspective on the Vatican Council* and in 1970 *The Future of Roman Catholic Theology: Vatican II, Catalyst for Change*.

Series VIII of Lindbeck’s papers held at the Divinity Library contains extensive documentation of ecumenical dialogue in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly in relation to the Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches.

## **Hans W. Frei** **Professor of Religious Studies**

Hans Wilhelm Frei was born in Germany in 1922, attended secondary school in England, and emigrated to the United States in 1938. He received a BS from North Carolina State College, a BD from Yale Divinity School, and a PhD from Yale. He was professor of religion at Wabash College and the Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest before joining the Yale faculty in 1957. Frei taught both at YDS and at the Department of Religious Studies, serving as chairman of the Department of Religious Studies from 1983 to 1986. He died unexpectedly in 1988.



William C. Placher wrote in his article “Hans Frei and the Meaning of Biblical Narrative” in *The Christian Century* (May 24 – 31, 1989):

“Hans Frei, who died last September at the age of 66 after a very brief illness, was never famous outside the guild of theologians. He was a perfectionist who wrote slowly and published reluctantly. In over 30 years of teaching at Yale he devoted himself unstintingly to his students, often at the expense of his own research. And what he wrote was never faddish and often technical. Yet future historians just may consider him the most important American theologian of his generation.”

In his article “The Origins of Postliberalism” (*The Christian Century*, July 4–11, 2001), Gary Dorrien wrote that “Postliberal theology began as a Yale-centered phenomenon. It was founded by Yale theologians Hans Frei and George Lindbeck, who wrote the movement’s founding texts and who (before Frei’s untimely death in 1988) trained most of its key advocates.... The school’s founding argument was propounded by Frei in *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative* (1974). Frei observed that modern conservative and liberal approaches to the Bible both undermine the authority of scripture by locating the meaning of biblical teaching in some doctrine or worldview that is held to be more foundational than scripture itself.”

Hans Frei’s extensive papers ([Record Group 76](#)) are held at the Yale Divinity Library.

## **YDS and Postliberal Theology**

*A new term started making the theological rounds in the 1970s: postliberalism. A decade later it was stirring a full-blown debate, sometimes overheated, between two opposing schools of thought that, for better or worse, got boiled down to the names of two divinity schools: Yale vs. Chicago.*

*Arguments around postliberalism also spoke to an enduring YDS ethos, the effort to articulate Christian belief in a never-ending encounter with a changing culture.*

*Postliberalism centered on two Yale scholars, George Lindbeck (1946 BD, 1955 PhD) and Hans Frei (1945 BD, 1956 PhD), and some of their students. Historical theologian Lindbeck and biblical hermeneutics scholar Frei came from separate disciplines, but they became conversation partners: both wanted to break an impasse between entrenched perspectives found on the left and the right. They regarded both theological liberalism and conservatism as guilty of subordinating scripture to secular ideologies, distorting the nature of the biblical story itself.*

*Frei and Lindbeck, each in his own way, wanted to reassert biblical narrative as the touchstone for Christian discipleship and inquiry. The authors gave thought to the ways Christian tradition is handed down, interpreted, and absorbed by believers. They wanted to reckon with the ways scripture creates personal and communal meaning and practice. Frei and Lindbeck sought a path between left and right, with a plea to individuals and congregations to notice how scripture invites them into making the Bible story their own. This postliberal project came to be called a “Yale School” of doing theology...*

*The spirit of inquiry that fueled post-liberalism in the 1980s had arguably been evident at Yale for decades already. A previous generation of YDS professors laid the groundwork for questions regarding the church’s witness in a secular world... The question at YDS was how to assert the centrality of Christ while seeking a “generous orthodoxy,” a phrase made famous by Frei but inspired by Calhoun, who in his teaching found ways to harmonize historical-critical liberalism and Christian traditionalism...*

*Frei’s **The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative** (1974) and Lindbeck’s **The Nature of Doctrine** (1984) proved to be influential postliberal benchmarks. Their arguments benefited from the writings of YDS theologian David Kelsey, who pushed both authors to clarify their positions further. The postliberal discussion suffered immeasurably in 1988 with Frei’s unexpected death from a stroke at age sixty-six.*

*By the 1990s, postliberalism’s trajectory was moving in new directions. Several younger Yale-educated scholars, including theologian Kathryn Tanner of YDS, took up themes of Lindbeck or Frei but in ways that used insights from feminism, postmodernism, or cultural anthropology.*

**David Kelsey**  
**Luther A. Weigle Professor of Theology**

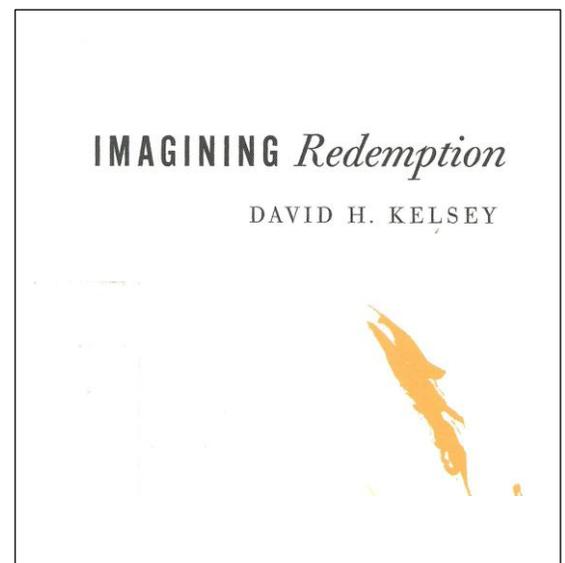


*David Kelsey (1958 BD, 1964 PhD), the Luther A. Weigle Professor of Theology, started teaching at YDS in 1965, retiring in 2005. Across decades of cultural transformation, Kelsey continued asking basic questions about God, human nature, the aims of church, the goals of theological education, and was described as “the clearest theological mind of his generation.”*

*Kelsey’s publications include *Imagining Redemption* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), *Between Athens and Berlin:**

*The Theological Education Debate* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), *To Understand God Truly: What’s Theological about Theological Education?* (Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), the two-volume title, *Eccentric Existence: A Theological Anthropology*, (Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), and *Human Anguish and God’s Power* (Cambridge University Press, 2021).

In a review of *Imagining Redemption* published in *Theology Today* (January 1, 2006), Elizabeth Koenig wrote, “This rich gem of a book distills many concerns of his long and distinguished career, including the uses of scripture in theology, the meanings of bodily and linguistic practices for Christian community, the critical correlation between theology and culture, and models of theological method and education. There are enlightening and relevant discussions of the theological meanings of interiority and exteriority, the theologian’s task as contrasted with that of the psychologist, the language of promise, the contributions imagination can make to theology and spiritual formation, and the need for patience and the taking of time in order to work out one’s “own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil 2:12).”



## Kathryn Tanner

### Frederick Marquand Professor of Systematic Theology



Kathryn Tanner (1979 BA, 1985 PhD) joined the Yale Divinity School faculty in 2010 after teaching at the University of Chicago Divinity School for sixteen years and in Yale's Department of Religious Studies for ten.

In his 2001 *Christian Century* article "The Origins of Postliberalism: A Third Way in Theology?" Gary

Dorrien included Tanner among "A generally younger group of Yale-trained postliberals now contributing to the development of postliberalism" along with Kathryn Greene-McCreight, Serene Jones, David Kamitsuka, Ian McFarland, Paul McGlasson, and Joe Mangina.

*By the 1990s, postliberalism's trajectory was moving in new directions. Several younger Yale-educated scholars, including theologian Kathryn Tanner of YDS, took up themes of Lindbeck or Frei but in ways that used insights from feminism, postmodernism, or cultural anthropology.*

*Tanner's Gifford Lectures in Scotland (2015-2016) focused on how Christian values can respond to global economic forces and offer an alternative vision to market inequalities.*

Her most recent book is *Christianity and the New Spirit of Capitalism* (Yale University Press, 2019). "Addressing head-on the issues of economic inequality, structural under- and unemployment, and capitalism's unstable boom/bust cycles, she draws deeply on the theological resources within Christianity to imagine anew a world of human flourishing." (Yale University Press website)

KATHRYN TANNER

Christianity

+ the New

Spirit of

Capitalism

**Margaret A. Farley**  
**Gilbert Stark Professor of Christian Ethics**



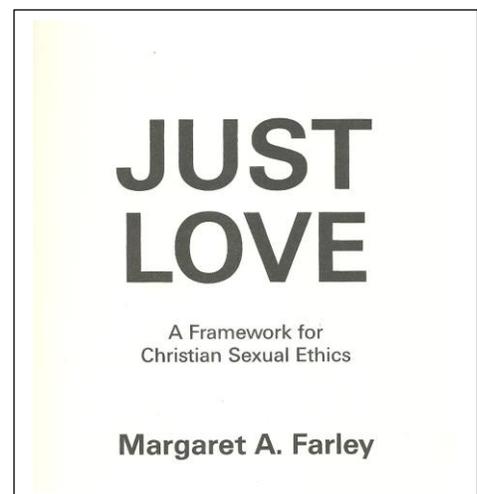
Margaret Farley is a renowned authority in the areas of the history of ethics, feminist ethics, phenomenology and ethics, medical ethics, sexual ethics, ethics and spirituality, and responses to the AIDS pandemic in Africa. She is taught at YDS from 1971 until 2007.

Her most recent books include *Compassionate Respect: A Feminist Approach to Medical Ethics. Madeleva Lecture* (Paulist Press, 2002), *Just Love: A Framework for Christian Sexual Ethics* (Continuum 2006), and *Changing the Questions: Explorations in Christian Ethics* (Orbis, 2015).

*Central to Farley's teaching was the question of how to respect others faithfully through all the complexities of human relations. As a member of the Sisters of Mercy order, a feminist theologian, and a Yale professor (eventually Gilbert L. Stark Professor of Christian Ethics), Farley moved easily among institutions, vocabularies, and debates, guided by the conviction that the image of God dwells in everyone. As a former student put it, Farley kept her sights on the mandates of love, not sin.*

Margaret Farley's work *Just Love: A Framework for Christian Sexual Ethics* (2006) was denounced by the Vatican's doctrinal office in 2012. Documentation related to this controversy is included in her papers held at the Yale Divinity Library. ([Record Group 29](#))

Also documented in her papers is the work of the *Women's Initiative: Gender, Faith, and Responses to HIV/AIDs in Africa* project, of which Farley and Letty Russell were leaders.



**Letty Russell**  
**Professor of Theology**



*For three decades, theologian Letty Mandeville Russell challenged YDS to imagine a larger vision of the church by stressing its leading edges of liberation theologies, feminism, post-colonial perspectives, queer theology, and ecumenism. One of the first women ordained in the United Presbyterian Church, she worked as a minister in East Harlem for sixteen years before joining the YDS faculty in 1974. That ministerial experience among struggling people decisively informed her Yale teaching themes of biblical justice, church renewal, hospitality, and partnership.*

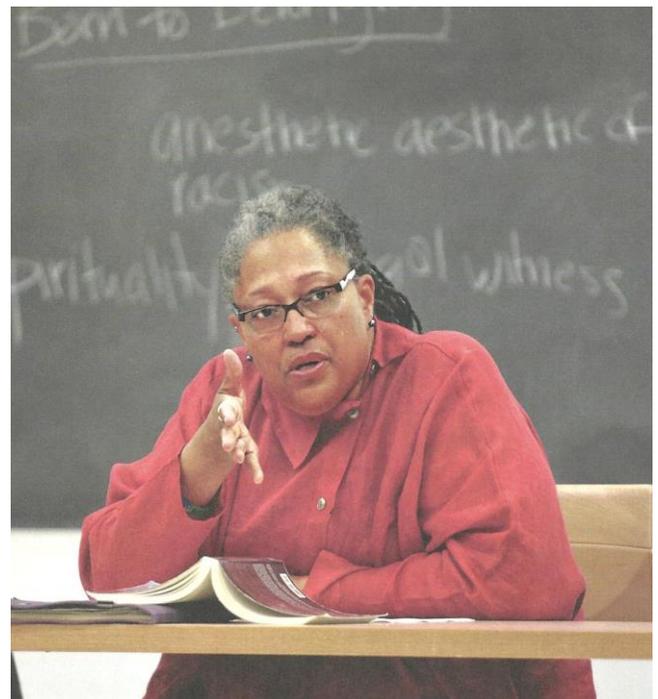
*Her work had global impact. She helped create collaborative networks of women theologians in Africa and elsewhere on urgent themes of public health and society. She was involved in Yale's partnerships with the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians and also the YDS Women's Initiative: Gender, Faith, and Responses to HIV/AIDS in Africa, addressing the dire impact of the illness on the continent and its disproportionate burden on women.*

**Other prominent women theologians who spent significant portions of their careers at Yale Divinity School include L. Serene Jones and Emilie M. Townes.**



Now President of Union Theological Seminary in New York, **Serene Jones** received her PhD from Yale and taught at YDS from 1991 to 2008, becoming Titus Street Professor of Theology. In her teaching, Jones challenged YDS students to ask new questions about Calvin and other Reformers. She is the author of several books, including *Calvin and the Rhetoric of Piety* (Westminster John Knox, 1995) and *Feminist Theory and Christian Theology: Cartographies of Grace* (Fortress, 2000).

**Emilie Townes** was Andrew W. Mellon Professor of African American Religion and Theology and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at YDS from 2005 to 2013. She served as Dean of Vanderbilt Divinity School from 2013 to 2023 and now is on the faculty there. Townes writes as a womanist theologian and Christian ethicist about cultural theory, economic justice, health care, poetry, institutional leadership, and theologies of embodiment. Notable publications by Townes include *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) and *Womanist Theological Ethics: a Reader*, edited by Katie Geneva Cannon, Emilie M. Townes, and Angela D. Sims



Though lack of space in the physical exhibit from which this online version is excerpted made significant documentation of other YDS faculty impossible, the following former and current professors deserve mention for their places in the panoply of YDS contributors to the fields of theology, ethics, and philosophy of religion over the two hundred years since the School's founding.



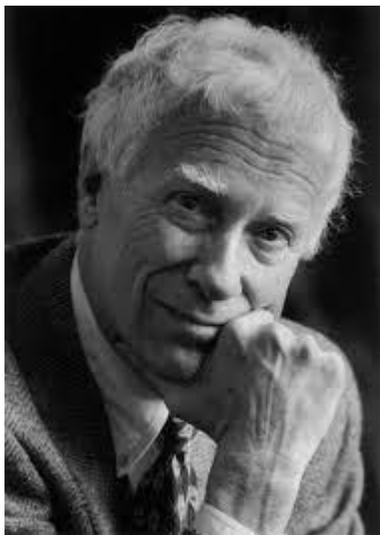
**James Gustafson**  
Professor of Christian Ethics  
1955-1972



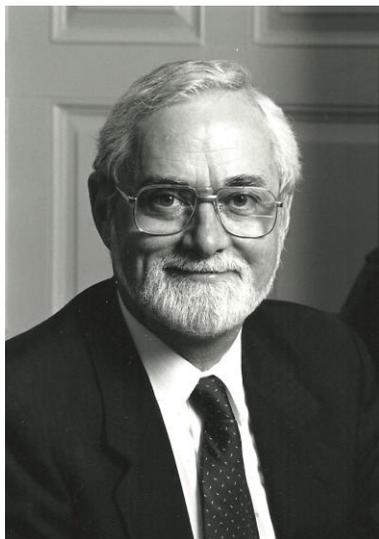
**Paul L. Holmer**  
Noah Porter Professor of  
Philosophical Theology  
1960-1987



**Gene Outka**  
Dwight Professor of Philosophy  
and Christian Ethics  
1975-2011



**Nicholas P. Wolterstorff**  
Noah Porter Professor of  
Philosophical Theology  
1989-2002



**Thomas W. Ogletree**  
Dean & Marquand Professor of  
Theological Ethics  
1990-2009



**Marilyn McCord Adams**  
Horace Tracy Pitkin Professor  
of Historical Theology  
1993-2004

Current faculty members (2023):



**Denys Turner**  
Horace Tracy Pitkin Professor of Historical Theology  
2005-2014



**Miroslav Volf**  
Henry B. Wright Professor of Systematic Theology  
1998-



**John E. Hare**  
Noah Porter Professor of Philosophical Theology  
2003-



**Teresa Berger**  
Professor of Liturgical Studies and Thomas E. Golden Jr. Professor of Catholic Theology  
2007-



**Jennifer A. Herdt**  
Gilbert L. Stark Professor of Christian Ethics  
2010-



**John Pittard**  
Professor of Philosophy of Religion  
2013-



**S. Mark Heim**  
Samuel Abbot Professor of Christian Theology at Andover  
Newton Seminary at YDS



**Linn Tonstad**  
Associate Prof. of Theology,  
Religion, and Sexuality  
2012-



**Willie James Jennings**  
Associate Prof. of Systematic  
Theology and Africana Studies  
2016-

Building on its strong history, YDS is welcoming a new generation of faculty whose work reminds YDS of a bigger world of Christian inquiry beyond the European inheritance. The earlier history takes its place as one strand in a larger global story of people of faith, their struggles for freedom, their interrogations of power and disruptions of inhuman traditions. The ecology of learning at YDS is changing, with the aim of broadening imagination and connectedness, while still retaining the strengths of its past.



**Volker Leppin**  
Horace Tracy Pitkin Professor  
of Historical Theology  
2021-



**Eboni Marshall Turman**  
Associate Professor of  
Theology and African  
American Religion  
2016-



**Clifton Granby**  
Associate Professor of Ethics,  
Philosophy, and Africana  
Studies 2017-

For more exhibits highlighting aspects of Yale Divinity School's history, see:  
<https://web.library.yale.edu/divinity/exhibitions>.

Exhibit curated by Martha Lund Smalley