

We **produce world-class scholarship** and build networks of like-minded scholars. Ideas matter. They capture our imaginations, and humans are imagining creatures. But ideas do not float above the world like wisps of smoke. They inform the concrete stuff of our lives. And since we are social beings, they do their work by circulating between us. YCFC produces deep Christian reflection on God, Christ, and flourishing, and develops connections with scholars elsewhere doing similar work in order to maximize our combined positive impact in the academy.



We **listen to, engage with, and resource publics beyond the academy.** YCFC is never content to let its intellectual work remain inaccessible to people in the pulpit, the pews, the office, or the home. We communicate the deep wisdom of the Christian tradition in ways that connect today and matter for daily life.



Ours is a faith that will not leave the world behind, will not rest content with merely private piety. In a world yearning for the flourishing life for which God made it, faith and the theology that seeks to understand it must be engaged with life in its full scope. That is the work of the Yale Center for Faith & Culture.

YCFC Leadership



Miroslav Volf, Founder & Director

Miroslav Volf is the Henry B. Wright Professor of Theology at Yale Divinity School. He has written or edited more than 20 books, including *Exclusion and Embrace*, winner of the Grawemeyer Award in Religion, and named one of the 100 most important religious books of the 20th Century by *Christianity Today*.



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Scott Stephenson
Gregory Sterling

409 Prospect Street, New Haven, CT 06511
203-432-8629 ycfinfo@yale.edu
faith.yale.edu



Yale Center for Faith & Culture at Yale Divinity School



Our mission is to critically examine and promote practices of faith which advance authentic human flourishing and the global common good.

What is the Yale Center for Faith & Culture?

The gospel of Jesus Christ calls us to a way of life. It presents a vision of flourishing, of abundant life, and commissions us in service of that vision. This vision of flourishing is expansive. It claims our lives in every aspect. The gospel cannot be placed neatly in a container beside other values and interests. Discipleship is not one activity alongside others. No, the yeast of the kingdom of God leavens the whole of our lives.

In response to this comprehensive call, the Yale Center for Faith & Culture (YCFC) articulates and promotes practices of faith that advance authentic human flourishing. It does so in service of our churches, our cultures, our world, and our God.

How do we do this?

We work to **revitalize seminary and undergraduate education.** At its best, education is not the impartation of sterile information, but a process of vital formation. We teach divinity school students to let their faith shape their visions of flourishing, and we teach undergraduates how to wrestle with the most meaningful question of their lives—what makes a life worth living?



“This is the best and most life-relevant class I have ever taken in my life.”
—Christ & Flourishing Student

“For real, this class changed my life.”
—Life Worth Living Student

Christ and Flourishing

Humans are made to flourish, to receive abundant life (John 10:10). The life of Jesus Christ is the lens that allows us to see the shape of truly flourishing life and the gift that invites us into such life. Through the Christ and Flourishing program, YCFC inspires Christians to reflect deeply on the significance of Christ's life and to live in its light.

Our guiding questions are: What does it mean for Christ to be the key to human existence and flourishing? What does flourishing look like if Jesus Christ is taken to be the key? The Christ & Flourishing program explores these questions through scholarship, teaching, and public engagement.



Scholarly books and articles by YCFC researchers contribute to reshaping theological scholarship around the question of flourishing life in relation to God and enriching our understanding of what flourishing life looks like today. Collaborative consultations gather scholars from a wide variety of fields and institutions to generate new ideas about topics vital to the task of envisioning flourishing life. YCFC research grants support scholars working on projects related to Christ and Flourishing at institutions such as the University of Virginia, the University of Chicago, Duke Divinity School, and Baylor University.

The Christ and Flourishing seminar at Yale Divinity School integrates close reading of scripture, engagement with a wide variety of scholarly and popular texts, and personal spiritual formation to equip future leaders in church and society with the tools to develop a Christ-centered vision of flourishing life.

YCFC Director Miroslav Volf lectures widely in order to take Christ and Flourishing beyond the university classroom, and publications in popular periodicals get the message out to a broader audience.

Life Worth Living

Today, more than at any previous time in history, the question of the good life—what makes for a flourishing life—is a pressing one. This question once came pre-answered—by culture, by religion, by tradition—but these days, we each have to ask and answer for ourselves: What is the good life? What does it mean to live a flourishing life? These are difficult questions that require intellectual muscles many of us have never developed; we need one another's help to ask and answer them well.

The Life Worth Living Program exists to revive critical discussion about this most important question: *What is a life worth living?* Through our courses, research, student fellows program, and campus and community events, we aim to facilitate conversation across important and enduring lines of difference on questions of meaning and purpose at Yale and around the world.

The core of the program is the undergraduate course, Life Worth Living, which draws upon a range of philosophical and religious traditions to help students develop habits of reflection that will equip them for the life-long process of discerning the good life. Alongside this core course is a class for freshmen, Education & Life Worth Living, which invites first year students to consider at the very beginning of their undergraduate education: What sort of person do you want to become and how is your college education going to help you become that person? These courses are being adapted for other college and secondary school campuses across the country and around the world.

Beyond the classroom, the Life Worth Living program convenes conversations about meaning and purpose across important and enduring lines of difference. On Yale's campus, these events are facilitated by our Yale undergraduate fellows, a committed group of students from multiple religious and non-religious backgrounds.



Adolescent Faith & Flourishing

The young are arguably the segment of our population whose flourishing is most undermined by our culture's obsession with maximizing experientially satisfying living. They may also be the most open to embracing a revised account of human flourishing as they grow into their own responsibilities as citizens, parents, and leaders.

The Adolescent Faith & Flourishing Program seeks to advance authentic flourishing among youth by supporting scholarship, programming, and curricular resources which are grounded in and shaped by the lived experiences of young people.

YCFC scholars explore questions of meaning and flourishing for adolescents through the lens of theology and with particular attention to the needs and experiences of young people. Research grants support the work of leading scholars in youth ministry, practical theology, and the social sciences, drawing upon the insights of multiple disciplines to enhance and support transformative Christian youth ministries. Collaborative meetings between scholars and youth ministry practitioners promote dialogue, mentorship, and opportunities to envision innovative ways of shaping the field of youth ministry around questions of flourishing.

Central to the Adolescent Faith & Flourishing program is a "Lunch & Lecture" series and a weeklong summer symposium, both of which bring top youth ministry scholars and practitioners to Yale Divinity School to speak to local pastors, youth ministers, laypersons, and seminarians. Through its work with scholars and practitioners, the program is also supporting the development of curricular resources to address ways of helping adolescents cultivate practices and virtues which inspire and sustain joyful, flourishing lives.



YCFC At-A-Glance

Revitalizing Education

- 126 Yale College students have taken our Life Worth Living course since 2014. The class has received 465 applications.
- Life Worth Living courses have been adapted and taught at universities and secondary schools in the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom.
- Since 2015, roughly 10 percent of Yale Divinity School students have taken our Christ & Flourishing course.

Producing World-Class Scholarship

- YCFC Scholars have written or edited 12 books since 2010.
- From 2014 to Spring 2017, YCFC hosted 23 collaborative scholarly consultations, which produced 113 papers on topics ranging from Joy, Trust, and Suspicion to the future of theology. We plan for 10 more in 2017-2018.
- Since 2016, YCFC has awarded grants to 49 scholars in fields ranging from philosophy and systematic theology to Confucian studies and practical theology.

Engaging with & Resourcing Publics

- The Joy & Adolescent Faith & Flourishing Lunch and Lecture series convenes a community of roughly 75 local youth ministry leaders and provides tools and insights for their ministry.
- Educational videos from YCFC have received over 250,000 views since the beginning of 2016.
- YCFC Director Miroslav Volf regularly speaks to lay and specialist audiences around the world.
- YCFC scholars write for popular publications including the *Washington Post*, *The Christian Century*, and *Sojourners*.

What does it mean for life... to be *led well?* to *go well?* to *feel good?*