

FROM THE DEAN

Dear Friends of YDS,

As A.D. 2006 came to a close, the community of Yale Divinity School had much to be thankful for and much about which to be concerned. The cover of this year's *Spectrum* encapsulates the major element of our concern. A war rages in Iraq, initiated by our government. This war—or is it simply an “insurgency”—continues to consume the lives of American soldiers, Iraqi police and military personnel, and, in every expanding numbers, Iraqi civilians. Many of us thought that the war was at best ill advised and at worst immoral. Whatever our judgments about the start of the conflict, our general consensus, reinforced by the fall elections, is that we must find a way to end the brutality and begin to bring our troops home. The “boots” on the Quad (cover photo), along with the photographs of “unembedded” journalists which graced our walls this fall reminded us of the stark human costs of our country's intervention in Iraq.

Beyond the current military engagement lies a larger problem that the Divinity School has been trying of late to engage. The division between the Abrahamic faiths is one of the most daunting challenges of the early twenty-first century and we must take that confrontation seriously as an important part of the context of contemporary theological reflection. A new initiative in Christian-Muslim reconciliation at the Center for Faith & Culture is an effort to respond to that challenge. Stay tuned for updates on that effort.

While the international scene remains troublesome, we have made progress here at home in the last year. The Quad has received further renovations, from the interior of Marquand chapel, to the exterior of the “back buildings,” to the roofs of the octagonal “guest cottages” at the west end of the Quad. The continuing renovation of the physical plant, which will continue in the years ahead, mirrors the on-going efforts to maintain the most effective theological faculty possible. Several new colleagues, both senior and junior, enhanced the faculty ranks this fall, and new searches are underway for more stellar colleagues. The quality of the incoming students remains high and our record of placing graduates in both ministerial and other professions and continuing education continues to be strong.

The research efforts of YDS have continued to match the excellence of its instructional program. Granting agencies have recently provided major new support for research projects at YDS: the Lilly Endowment to the Center for

Faith & Culture; the National Endowment for the Humanities and others to the Jonathan Edwards Center; the Carpenter Foundation for the outreach efforts of our publication program; the Jessie Ball Dupont Foundation for our initiative in Religion and Politics. These grants, coupled with the generosity of our alumni and friends, have combined to make this a significant year for the advancement of the work of YDS.

The success of the past year is but a stepping stone to the future. As part of the University's efforts to envision and make possible “Yale Tomorrow,” the Divinity School has sketched a plan for its future that will involve greater support for students, enhanced faculty and programmatic resources, and the completion of the regeneration of our physical plant. With the continued generosity of our alumni and friends we will be able to make that vision a reality.

Building a stronger Divinity School is worth the effort only if it helps to address the problems of a world represented on our cover, a world where too many empty boots testify to the tragic dimensions of life. The School, dedicated to enhancing the knowledge and love of God, is also, of necessity, dedicated to addressing the wounds of the world that God loves. As always, the support of our friends and benefactors is essential in helping us to accomplish that mission. As always, we are enormously grateful for all that you have done for YDS, its students, and the world that they serve.

Sincerely,



Harold W. Attridge
Dean and Lillian Claus Professor of New Testament

