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# Guide to the Nels F. S. Ferré Papers

RG 286



Andover Newton Theological School Library staff

2017

409 Prospect Street  
New Haven, CT 06511  
divinity.library@yale.edu

<http://web.library.yale.edu/divinity/special-collections>

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Yale Divinity Library  
409 Prospect Street  
New Haven, CT 06511  
divinity.library@yale.edu  
<http://web.library.yale.edu/divinity/special-collections>

**CALL NUMBER:** RG 286

**CREATOR:** Ferré, Nels F. S. (Nels Frederick Solomon), 1908-1971

**TITLE:** Nels F. S. Ferré Papers

**DATES:** 1940-1968

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 7 linear feet (11 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The collection documents the professional life of Nels F. S. Ferré, who was professor of Christian Theology at Andover Newton Theological School (then known as Andover Theological Seminary - 1939-1950, 1957-1965), at Vanderbilt University, and at the College of Wooster.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.286>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use on site, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.286>.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.        box

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Transferred from Andover Newton Theological School Collection, 2017

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### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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### Preferred Citation

Nels F. S. Ferré Papers (RG 288), Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library.

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## Biographical / Historical

Nels F.S. Ferré was born in Sweden in 1908, and came to the United States at the age of 13. He received his undergraduate degree from Boston University in 1931. His interest in philosophy and theology led him to pursue the B.D. degree at Andover Newton; he graduated with the class of 1934. He received the AM. and Ph.D. degrees from Harvard University in 1936 and 1938 respectively. His doctoral work included a year of study at the universities of Uppsala and Lund. He was ordained to the Congregational ministry in 1934.

It was as a teacher and writer that Ferré made his major contributions to American thought. Academic appointments included the following: Instructor in Philosophy (1937-1939) and Abbot Professor of Christian Theology (1939-1950, 1957-1965), Andover Theological Seminary (now Andover Newton Theological School); Professor Philosophical Theology (1950-1957), Vanderbilt University; Scholar in Residence (1965-1968), Parsons College; Ferris Professor of Philosophy (1968-1971), College of Wooster. In addition, he was visiting professor at several institutions and offered many lectureship series.

Ferré's publications include the following books: *Swedish Contributions to Modern Theology* (1939), *The Christian Fellowship* (1940), *The Christian Faith, An Inquiry into its Adequacy as Man's Ultimate Religion* (1942), *Return to Christianity* (1943), *Faith and Reason* (1946), *Evil and the Christian Faith* (1947), *Pillars of Faith* (1948), *Christianity and Society* (1950), *The Christian Understanding of God* (1951), *Strengthening the Spiritual Life* (1951), *The Sun and the Umbrella* (1953), *Christian Faith and Higher Education* (1954), *Making Religion Real* (1955), *Christ and the Christian* (1958), *Know Your Faith* (1959), *Searchlights on Contemporary Theology* (1961), *God's New Age* (1962), *The Finality of Faith* (1963), *Reason in Religion* (1963), *A Theology for Christian Prayer* (1963), *The Living God of Nowhere and Nothing* (1966), *A Theology for Christian Education* (1967), and *The Universal Word* (1969).

Nels Ferré died in Wooster, Ohio, in 1971.

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## Scope and Contents

The Nels F. S. Ferré Papers, 1940-1968, document his professional work. The collection is arranged according to the following categories: diaries, date/address books, lecture notes, unpublished literary manuscripts, notes on readings, and collected articles and dissertations written about Ferré.

Refer to the faculty publication register ([RG 279](#)) for itemization of Ferré's publications.

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## Arrangement

Series I. Diaries and address books. Series II. Lecture Notes. Series III. Unpublished Literary Manuscripts. Series IV. Notes on Readings. Series V. Material about Ferré.

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**Collection Contents****Series I: Diaries and Date/Address Books**

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b.1	Diaries	1940, 1942, 1945, 1959
b.1	Date/address books	1944, 1945, 1947 (2), 1951, 1952, 1951-52, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1963, 1964, 1965 (2), 1966, 1967

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**Series II: Correspondence**

b.1	John to Ferré (NFSF)	1953 June 26
b.1	Gustaf Wingren to NFSF (in Swedish)	1958 September 9
b.1	Paul Tillich to NFSF	1960 September 19
b.1	Gustaf Aulen to NFSF (in Swedish)	1963 April 2
b.1	George P. Chandler to NFSF	1968 June 26
b.1	NFSF to Wayne (regarding resignation from Parsons College)	1968

## Series III: Notes

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b.1	Lecture notes, College of Wooster, Phil339, Whitehead Contemp.	1969
b.2	Personal library holdings (undated lists)	

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**Series IV: Unpublished Literary Manuscripts**

b. 2	A Charge to Danforth Teachers	
b. 2	The Christian Basis for Family Life	
b. 2	The Christian in Business	
b. 2	A Christian Pilgrimage (Prayer Service)	1944
b. 2	The Explanatory Word (seven chapters)	
b. 2	The Fabric of Paul Tillich's Theology	
b. 2	Hope by Stereotype	
b. 2	Learning and Life	
b. 2	The Place of Philosophy in the Curriculum	
b. 2	Relation of the Church to the War in the Light of the Christian Faith	1944
b. 2	Theology and the Modern Student	
b. 2	Theses on the Freedom of the Will, for the D Society, Cambridge University	



## Series V: Notes on Readings

This material consists of typed or handwritten notes and quotations on 3x5 and 4x6 index cards. The first part consists of cards as organized by NFSF, both by author and by topic. The second part consists of cards which had not been organized by NFSF; these are now organized into uncategorized notes and an alphabetical organization of authors quoted.

b. 3	Notes on Authors (organized by NFSF): Adams-St. Simon
b. 4	Notes on Authors (organized by NFSF): Smith, N.K.-Yuase
b. 4	Notes on Topics (organized by NFSF): Art-Holy Spirit
b. 5	Notes on Topics (organized by NFSF): Incarnation-XIV:Catalogue of Reality, Love
b. 6	Uncategorized Notes - Quotations: (arranged alphabetically by author) A
b. 7	Uncategorized Notes - Quotations: (arranged alphabetically by author) B-G
b. 8	Uncategorized Notes - Quotations: (arranged alphabetically by author) H-R
b. 9	Uncategorized Notes - Quotations: (arranged alphabetically by author) S-Z

**Series VI: Material About Ferré**

## Articles

b. 10	"Ferré, unfair, uninformed." (letter to editor in unidentified periodical)	No date
b. 10	Fuller, David, Otis. The Blasphemies of Nels Ferré. Grand Rapids MI: Wealthy St. Baptist Church.	No date
b. 10	Pierce, Richard D. "Nels Fredrick Solomon Ferré." ADVANCE (January 1944): 6-7.	1944
b. 10	Bjorn, Thyra and Margaret Ferré. "A Boy Who Dared to Dream." YOUNG PEOPLE 70 (July 16, 1950): 1, 6. (2 copies)	1950
b. 10	"Redaktionens Spalt: Se Pa Klockan!" UNGA KAMRATER 10 (Mar. 5-11, 1950): 2.	1950
b. 10	Yamaka, Shiroshi. "Correspondence from America with Sketches, no. 42." MUTSU-SHIMPO 2630 (Apr. 10, 1953). (Japanese original with English translation)	1953
b. 10	Soper, David Wesley. "The Postcritical Theology of Nels F.S. Ferré." Chap. in MAJOR VOICES IN AMERICAN THEOLOGY. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953. pp. 73-105	1953
b. 10	LeQuire, Louise. "Creative Art Marks Many New Churches." NASHVILLE BANNER (Sep. 16, 1954)	1954
b. 10	"What They Think."(excerpts from speech) NEWSWEEK (November 8, 1954): 65.	1954
b. 10	[incomplete article in which NFSF is quoted] CHRISTIAN LIFE (Mar.-Apr. 1956)	1956
b. 10	Hordern, William. "The Theology of Nels Ferré." THE PASTOR 19 (Feb. 1956): 10-12.	1956
b. 10	Pemberton, Prentiss L. "An Examination of Some Criticisms of Talcott Parsons' Sociology of Religion." JOURNAL OF RELIGION 36 (Oct. 1956): 241-256.	1956
b. 10	Soper, David Wesley. "The Sufficiency of God: The Postcritical Theology of Nels F.S. Ferré." BRITISH WEEKLY (Aug. 9, 1956): 9, 11.	1956
b. 10	White, S.S.. "The Controversy Between Ferré and Tillich, I." THE PREACHER'S MAGAZINE 31/9 (Sep. 1956): 1-5.	1956
b. 10	White, S.S.. "The Controversy Between Ferré and Tillich, III." THE PREACHER'S MAGAZINE 31/11 (Nov. 1956): 16-20.	1956
b. 10	How to Lecture on Theology When It's Ninety-Five in the Shade." BRITISH WEEKLY 140/3688 (July 18, 1957): 1. (9 pictures, Front Page, comments by Ed.)	1957
b. 10	Ilico. "An Unsatisfactory Conversation." 139/3673 BRITISH WEEKLY (Apr. 4, 1957): 4.	1957
b. 10	"Vespers Draws Outstanding Theologians." PEABODY REFLECTOR 30/4 (May-June 1957): 130.	1957

## Articles (continued)

b. 10	Bradley, William L. "Theology a Live Topic at Boston." ADVANCE 150/13 (July 8, 1958): 8-10.	1958
b. 10	Gray, Wallace. "Whitehead and Ferré Discuss God." THE HIBBERT JOURNAL 56/125 (Apr. 1958): 262-272.	1958
b. 10	Clark, Gordon H. "The Theology of Nels F.S. Ferré." THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL 17/46 (Mar. 18, 1959): 6-9.	1959
b. 10	"Dr. Nels F.S. Ferré." (editorial) OPINION (July, Aug., Sep. 1959): 8-9.	1959
b. 10	"Graham and Ferré" THE BRITISH WEEKLY 143/3777 (Apr. 2, 1959): 6.	1959
b. 10	Gray, Wallace. "Issues in Contemporary Evangelism, I: Billy Graham Meets Nels Ferré." RELIGION IN LIFE 28/2 (Spring 1959): 163-180.	1959
b. 10	Johnson, Robert Clyde. "The Normative Theology of Nels F.S. Ferré." in AUTHORITY IN PROTESTANT THEOLOGY. ed. Robert Clyde Johnson. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959. pp. 153-161.	1959
b. 10	"About the New Mood in Politics." [incomplete article in which NFSF is quoted] ESQUIRE (Jan. 1960) : .	1960
b. 10	Gray, Wallace. "Billy Grahams Theologie?" MONATSSCHRIFT FUR PASTORALTHEOLOGIE 49/9 (Sep. 1960): 359-371.	1960
b. 10	Gray, Wallace. "Nels Ferré and Reinhold Niebuhr Discuss War." CANADIAN JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY 6/4 (Oct. 1960): 237-261.	1960
b. 10	Nelson, Alvin F. and Gustave A. Ferré. "God as Agape." in BASIC PHILOSOPHICAL ISSUES. : Educational Publishers, 1962. pp. 321-326.	1962
b. 10	Cobb, John B. "On Being Post-Christian." CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE 7/12 (June 6, 1963): 12-13.	1963
b. 10	Dawson, John B. "Nels Ferré, Who Proved Prayer's Power." in PEOPLE OF PRAYER. Nashville: Upper Room, 1963. pp. 46-51.	1963
b. 10	Haas, Theodore E. "The Extreme Middle in Christian Theology: An Interpretation of Nels Ferré." THEOLOGY AND LIFE 6/2 (Summer 1963): 144-153.	1963
b. 10	Parrinder, E. G. "Religion Today. 16. Is the World Council in Heresy?" THE HIBBERT JOURNAL 61/243 (July 1963): 161-164.	1963
b. 10	Duthie, Charles. "The God Who Is Involved: The Theology of Nels Ferré." BRITISH WEEKLY (Dec. 2, 1965): 12-13.	1965
b. 10	Duthie, Charles. "The Problem of Evil." BRITISH WEEKLY (Dec. 9, 1965): 9.	1965
b. 10	Duthie, Charles. "The Theologian for Today: Nels Ferré." BRITISH WEEKLY (Nov. 25, 1965): 10-11.	1965
b. 10	Dean, Larry. "Dr. Ferré Delivers 1st Lecture at BYU." DAILY UNIVERSE [Brigham Young University] (Feb. 1966): 1-2	1966
b. 10	Gray, Wallace. "God Is Dead -- Or Is He?" COMMUNIO VIATORUM 1-2 (1968): 39-60.	1968

## Reviews of NFSF books

b. 10	Barclay, William. "Review of 'Strength to Live with God.' by Nels F.S. Ferré." THE EXPOSITORY TIMES 68 (May 1957): 255-256.	1957
b. 10	McCracken, Robert J. "Review of 'Christ and the Christian.' by Nels F.S. Ferré." WESTMINSTER BOOKMAN 17/4 (Dec. 1958) :5-6.	1958
b. 10	"Dr. Nels Ferré's 'Christ and the Christian.'" THE EXPOSITORY TIMES 70/7 (Apr. 1959): 193-195.	1959
b. 10	Albritton, Walter M. "Review of 'Know Your Faith' by Nels F.S. Ferré." THE NEW CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE (Sep. 1959): 84-85.	1959
b. 10	Johnson, Robert Clyde. "Review of 'Know Your Faith' by Nels F.S. Ferré." THE WESTMINSTER BOOKMAN 18/3 (Sep. 1959): 7-8.	1959
b. 10	Luecke, Richard. "Christ and the Christian, by Nels F.S. Ferré." THEOLOGY TODAY 16/4 (Jan. 1960): 530-539.	1960
b. 10	Temple, Howard. "Notes on the Theologian's Comment on Hermeneutics." JOURNAL OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE 79/2 (1960): 164-166.	1960
b. 10	Miller, William Robert. "Review of 'God's New Age' and 'The Finality of Faith.' by Nels F.S. Ferré." FELLOWSHIP 29/17 (Sep. 1, 1963): 28-29.	1963
b. 10	Homrighausen, E.G. "Review of 'A Theology for Christian Education.' by Nels F.S. Ferré." RELIGIOUS EDUCATION 62 (Nov.-Dec. 1967): 528-530.	1967
b. 10	Rood, Wayne R. "Review of 'A Theology for Christian Education.' by Nels F.S. Ferré." RELIGION IN LIFE 36/4 (Winter 1967): 617-619.	1967
b. 10	Cobb, W. Daniel. "Review of 'The Living God of Nowhere and Nothing. I by Nels F.S. Ferré.'" ENCOUNTER 29/2 (Spring 1968): 218-219.	1968
b. 10	Tait, Gordon L. "The Universal Word and Its Author." WOOSTER ALUMNI MAGAZINE 84/1 (Oct. 1969): 10-12.	1969
b. 10	Durfee, Harold A. "Review of 'The Universal Word.' by Nels F.S. Ferré." RELIGION IN LIFE 39/1 (Spring 1970): 148-149.	1970

## Dissertations on NFSF

b. 10	Schrag, Oswald O. EXISTENTIALISM AND RATIONALISM IN THE THOUGHT OF NELLS F. S. FERRE. Boston: Boston University Graduate School,	1952
b. 10	Moissides, George Lazarus. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE THEOLOGY OF HENRY NELSON WEIMAN AND OF THE THEOLOGY OF NELLS F. S. FERRE. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, Graduate School of Education	1955
b. 10	Molloy, Vincent P. THE CHRISTOLOGY OF NELLS F. S. FERRE. Rome: Catholic Book Agency	1965
b. 10	Chandler, George Patterson. THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THEOLOGICAL METHOD IN NELS FERRE. Atlanta: Emory University Graduate School	1967

## Unpublished papers on NFSF

Unpublished papers on NFSF (continued)

b. 10	Robert Brank Fulton, "Towards a fuller inter-faith dialogue."	No date, after 1967
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Autobiographical

b. 11	Typescript autobiography: "Naked Before God: A Saga of Faith"	No date
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## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Names**

Ferré, Nels F. S. (Nels Frederick Solomon),  
1908-1971

### **Corporate Body**

Andover Newton Theological School