

Gary Dorrien wins award for book on black Social Gospel

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Gary Dorrien, professor of social ethics at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, won the 2017 Grawemeyer Award in religion for his book *The New Abolition: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Black Social Gospel*.

The award honoring “creative and significant insights into the relationship between human beings and the Divine” is given annually by the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and the University of Louisville. The prize is one of five given in different fields and includes \$100,000. Recipients will give free lectures in Louisville, Kentucky, in April.

“There is something new that started in the 1880s with the Social Gospel,” Dorrien said in 2009 in an interview with Bill Moyers. “You have a sociological consciousness itself that there’s such a thing as social structure.”

This gives rise to movements for change and coining the term *social justice*, said Dorrien, who is also an Episcopal priest and a professor of religion at Columbia University.

Tyler Mayfield, faculty director of the Grawemeyer Award, praised Dorrien’s recent book as especially relevant in addressing the intersection of race and religion in the United States today.

“We urgently need this historical and theological account in our religious communities and public discourse,” Mayfield said in a statement. “His compelling narration of the Black Social Gospel as a profoundly religious tradition of thought and activism underscores the crucial connections among the Black Church, social Christianity, the creation of black institutions, and the struggle for freedom.” —the *Christian Century* staff