

DAVID RALPH BAINS

Department of Biblical and Religious Studies, Samford University
800 Lakeshore Drive, Birmingham, AL 35229-2251
(205) 726-2879, fax (205) 726-2535
email: drbains@samford.edu

<https://www.samford.edu/arts-and-sciences/biblical-and-religious-studies/>

CURRENT POSITION

Professor
Department of Biblical and Religious Studies
Howard College of Arts and Sciences, Samford University

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Harvard University, Study of Religion, 1999. Dissertation: “The Liturgical Impulse in Mid-Twentieth-Century Mainline American Protestantism.”
A.M. Harvard University, Study of Religion, 1995.
B.A. University of Virginia, 1993, with High Distinction
Majors: Religious Studies and Physics.

PUBLICATIONS

Edited Works

Magic City Religion: Observations on Religion in Birmingham, Alabama, by Samford University Religious Studies Students. Website featuring 12 editorial essays by myself and 135 research essays by my undergraduate students that I have edited and posted. October 2019 to present. <https://magiccityreligion.org/>

Associate editor of *The Oxford Handbook of Religious Space*. Edited by Jeanne Halgren Kilde with associate editors Barbara R. Ambros, David Bains, Susan L. Graham, Leonard Norman Primiano, and David Simonowitz. New York: Oxford University Press, 2022.

The Development of the Church: “The Principle of Protestantism” and Other Historical Writings of Philip Schaff, ed. with Theodore Louis Trost. Mercersburg Theology Study Series. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2017.

Journal Articles

- “*Magic City Religion*: A Student-Authored Digital Humanities Project on Birmingham, Alabama.” *Fides et Historia* 53, no. 2 (summer/fall 2021): 34–46.
- “Philip Schaff: The Flow of Church History and the Development of Protestantism.” (With Theodore Louis Trost.) *Theology Today* 71, no. 4 (January 2015): 416–28.
- “Comparative Book Reviews and the Craft of Religious Studies.” *Teaching Theology and Religion* 15 (January 2012): 44–45.
- “Conduits of Faith: Reinhold Niebuhr’s Liturgical Thought.” *Church History* 73 (March 2004): 168–194.
- “Liturgical Revival in Methodism: The Order of St. Luke in the 1950s.” *The New Mercersburg Review* 23 (spring 1998): 62–72.

“Liturgical Change in a Presbyterian Cathedral: East Liberty Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.” *Anglican and Episcopal History* 61 (December 1992): 514–520.

Essays in Books

“Place, Space | Christianity | Modern America” in *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception* 22:833–834. Berlin: De Gruyter 2025.

“Christianity.” In *Understanding the Religions of the World: An Introduction*, edited by Will Deming. Second edition. New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2025.

“Christianity and Architecture.” In *Routledge Companion to Christianity and Culture*. Edited by Yaakov Ariel, Gregor Thuswaldner, and Jens Zimmermann. 537–53. London: Routledge, 2024.

Foreword to John Williamson Nevin. *Philosophy and the Contemporary World: Mercersburg, Culture, and the Church*. Edited by Adam Borneman and Patrick Carey. Mercersburg Theological Study Series. Vol. 11. vii-ix. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2024.

“Christian Sacred Architecture.” In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press, article published September 20, 2023. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.013.775>

“Protestant Spaces in North America.” In *Oxford Handbook of Religious Space*, edited by Jeanne Halgren Kilde. New York: Oxford University Press, 2022. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190874988.013.15>

“Secularization and Sacred Space.” In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press, article published March 25, 2021. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.013.929>.

“Beliefs and Practices.” In *The Future of Mainline Protestantism in America*, edited by James Hudnut-Beumler and Mark Silk, 59–82. New York: Columbia University Press, 2018.

“Church Architecture Worldwide since 1800.” In *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to World Christianity*, edited by Lamin Sanneh and Michael McClymond, 386–98. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016.

“Worship.” In *Vocabulary for the Study of Religion*, edited by Robert A. Segal and Kocku von Stuckrad, vol. 3, 617–18. Leiden: Brill, 2015.

“Christianity.” In *Understanding the Religions of the World: An Introduction*, edited by Will Deming, 325–88. New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015.

“Architecture, Protestant, From the Nineteenth Century to the Present.” In *Encyclopedia of Religion in America*, edited by Charles H. Lippy and Peter W. Williams. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2010. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781608712427>.

“Religious Thought.” In *Encyclopedia of Religion in America*.

“Worship, Catholic.” In *Encyclopedia of Religion in America*.

“Worship, Contemporary Currents.” In *Encyclopedia of Religion in America*.

“Worship, Protestant.” In *Encyclopedia of Religion in America*.

“Contemporary Worship: Trends and Patterns in Christian America.” In *Faith in America: Changes, Challenges, New Perspectives*, Vol. 3, *Personal Spirituality Today*, edited by Charles H. Lippy, 1–23. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006.

“James G. Keller.” In *American National Biography*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

“George Alexander McGuire.” In *American National Biography*.

“Charles Taze Russell.” In *American National Biography*.

Other Publications

- “Spaces for Worship: A Birmingham-Based Introduction.” *Magic City Religion*. July 2024. A 20,000-word, 130-image, multi-page web essay, <https://magiccityreligion.org/spaces-for-worship/>
- “Church Music: Past and Present.” Animate. Center for Worship and the Arts. Samford University, June 8, 2021. (1 hour) <https://youtu.be/TDx8Gf6Qq2E>
- “Spaces that Shape.” Animate. Center for Worship and the Arts. Samford University, May 4, 2021. (1 hour) <https://youtu.be/MOuXA2l7nYM?si=UUbpjim4NiZlbtz1>
- “All Saints’ Day: Three Themes.” *Center for Worship and the Arts Blog*. Samford University, October 28, 2020. <https://www.samford.edu/worship-arts/blog/2020/Bains-All-Saints-Day-Three-Themes>
- Department of Religion, Self-Study for Academic Program Review. Samford University, 2018.
- “Spaces that Shape” Center for Worship and the Arts, Samford University, June 28, 2017, (9 minute) <https://youtu.be/bOT6RWODMcE>.
- “An Anti-Slavery Church in Washington, D.C.: An Interview with David R. Bains.” *The Bulletin of the Congregational Library and Archives*, 2nd ser., 11, no. 2 (2015): 32–35.
- “Sacred Space: Shaping Samford’s Campus.” *Seasons* [Samford University] 22 (Winter 2005): 22–25.
- “History of the Sanctuary Building: Trinity United Methodist Church, Newport News, Virginia.” Newport News, VA: Trinity United Methodist Church, 2001.

FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS

Afterword for *The Shape of the Sacred: Eastern Orthodoxy and Architectural Modernity*, edited by Joseph L. Clarke and Inga Leonova (Fordham University Press).

WORK IN PROGRESS

“From Bones to Stones: The Remains of the Dead and the Building of Washington National Cathedral.” Journal article in preparation.

Religious Capital: Representing Religion in Washington, D.C.

Examines the creation, symbolism and ministries of churches and offices created by religious bodies to represent them in the symbolic landscape, political processes, and daily life of the nation’s capital.

HONORS

Outstanding Teacher Award, Howard College of Arts & Sciences, Samford University, 2024.

General Education Design Fair, Samford University, blue ribbon in micro category for "Religion in a New Samford General Education Curriculum" (with T. Scott McGinnis), December 2023.

Honorary Geographer of the Year, Department of Geography and Sociology, Samford University, 2021.

S. Louis and Ann W. Armstrong Professor of Religion, Samford University, 2016 to 2018.
Phi Beta Kappa, Beta of Virginia, 1992.

PRESENTATIONS AT PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS

- “Beyond ‘What a Beautiful Campus!’: Engaging with Samford’s Architecture in Courses.” Mini-Conference on Teaching and Learning, Samford University, August 19, 2025.
- “The Un-naming of Philip Schaff Library” with Theodore L. Trost, III. American Society of Church History, Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, January 5, 2025.
- “Inscribing History, Celebrating Names: Church Cornerstone Practices in Birmingham, Alabama.” 2024 Meeting of the Conference on Faith & History, Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama, October 11, 2024.
- “The Relioscape of Birmingham, Alabama: Civil Rights Movement Churches, Downtown & Beyond.” Religion, Space, and Communities: Doing Interdisciplinary Work in Religion, Architecture, Public History, and Higher Education, An Event Honoring Jeanne Kilde, Director of the Religious Studies Program, University of Minnesota (via Zoom), October 19, 2023.
- “Assessing the Current State of Methodology in the Study of Religious Spaces, Places, and Landscapes: An Introduction to *The Oxford Handbook of Religious Space*.” Panelist. Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Denver, Colo., November 21, 2022.
- “*Magic City Religion*: Using Public-Facing Essays on Religion in Birmingham to Advance Learning.” Reconnect 2021 Mini-Conference on Teaching and Learning, Samford University, Birmingham, Ala., August 23, 2021.
- “Developing Racial and Ethnic Symbolic Capital through D.C. Houses of Worship: Sikh, Ukrainian Catholic, and African Methodist Episcopal Buildings.” Race, Ethnicity, and Architecture in the Nation’s Capital: thirteenth biennial symposium organized by the Latrobe Chapter, Society of Architectural Historians, Washington, D.C., February 2021 (online).
- “The Digital Humanities and Religion in Birmingham.” Samford Mini-Conference on Teaching and Learning, Birmingham, Ala., August 19, 2019.
- “Philip Schaff and the Place of the Bible in the Organic Development of Protestantism.” The Bible and the Reformation: 2017 Baylor Symposium on Faith and Culture. Waco, Tex., October 27, 2017. Annual meeting of the American Society of Church History, Chicago, Ill., January 3, 2019.
- “Congregationalism, Anti-Slavery, and the Claiming of Denominational Ground in Washington, D.C.” Spring meeting of the American Society of Church History, Minneapolis, Minn., April 17, 2015.
- “Stones and Replicas: Using the Holy Land to Christianize the American Capital.” Annual meeting of the Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion, Nashville, Tenn., March 7, 2015.
- “Stones of Hope: American Protestants and Gothic Revival Churches.” Annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Baltimore, Md., November 24, 2014.
- “Schaf(f) Unveils *The Principle of Protestantism*” with Theodore L. Trost, III. Annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Baltimore, Md., November 23, 2014.
- “American Sacred Spaces in Crisis,” response to papers. American Society of Church History, Portland, Ore., April 5, 2013.
- “Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Cold War, and Presbyterian Identity.” Spring meeting of the American Society of Church History, Portland, Ore., April 5, 2013.
- “Denominations and the Claiming of Civic Space in Mid-Nineteenth-Century, Washington, D.C.” Annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion. Chicago, Ill. November 2012.

- “‘Where Rome is Right’: Shaping a Protestant Catholicism through Worship. Annual meeting of the American Catholic Historical Association. Chicago, Ill. January 7, 2012.
- “Portmanteau Space: Bringing Religious Meanings to Nonreligious Space,” response to papers. Annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion. Atlanta, Ga. October 30, 2010.
- “Teaching about Worship Space.” Annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion. Montreal, Quebec, Canada, November 6, 2009.
- “Garfield, Johnson, and Reagan: Three Disciples Presidents and Their Relationship to the National City Christian Church.” Spring meeting of the American Society of Church History, Montreal, Quebec, April 18, 2009.
- “Helen Keller and Washington National Cathedral as ‘America’s Westminster Abbey.’” Annual meeting of the Alabama Historical Association, Florence, Ala., April 18, 2008.
- “‘America’s Westminster Abbey’: Establishing the National Status of Washington National Cathedral.” Annual meeting of the American Society of Church History. Washington, D.C., January 6, 2008.
- “A Tale of Two National Churches: National Presbyterian Church and National City Christian Church.” The 34th annual conference on Washington, D.C. Historical Studies. Washington, D.C., November 2, 2007.
- “A National Cathedral? Protestants’ Reception of Washington Cathedral.” Legacies and Promise: 400 Years of Anglican/Episcopal History sponsored by the Historical Society of the Episcopal Church, National Episcopal Historians and Archivists, and the Episcopal Women’s History Project. Williamsburg, Va., June 25, 2007.
- “A Presbyterian ‘Cathedral’? Congregational Space and Civic Space in the History of the National Presbyterian Church.” Building Spiritual Washington: seventh biennial symposium on the historic development of metropolitan Washington, D.C. of the Latrobe Chapter, Society of Architectural Historians, Washington, D.C., March 17, 2007.
- “A Capital Presence: The Presbyterian Quest for a ‘National Church’ in Washington, D.C.” Annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Washington, D.C., November 21, 2006.
- “National’ Churches in a Denominational Society: Building National Methodist and Presbyterian Churches in Washington, D.C.” Annual meeting of the Southeastern Commission on the Study of Religion, Atlanta, Ga., March 2006.
- “Public Religion, Shaping Past and Present America,” response to papers. Annual meeting of the Southeastern Commission on the Study of Religion, March 2005.
- “Conduits of Faith: Reinhold Niebuhr on Liturgy.” Annual meeting of the North American Academy of Liturgy, January 2003.
- “Author meets Critics” presentation on *The Churches of Christ in the Twentieth Century: Homer Hailey’s Personal Journey of Faith*, by David Edwin Harrell, Jr. Southeast American Religious History Discussion Group, Nashville, Tenn., November 2001.
- “Exhibiting the Church: Twentieth-Century Protestant Gothic Monuments in the United States.” Annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Orlando, Fla., November 1998.
- “Tradition, Church, and Changes in Protestant Appreciation of Liturgy: The Order of St. Luke in the Methodist Church in the 1950s.” Annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, San Francisco, Calif., November 1997.

INVITED LECTURES AT UNIVERSITIES

- “*Magic City Religion*: As a Digital Religious Studies Project.” REL502 “Public Humanities and Religious Studies,” University of Alabama, November 19, 2024 (via Zoom).
- “Placing Denominations in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Washington, D.C.” Surveying Sacred Space: An Interdisciplinary Interfaith Symposium. Pepperdine University, Malibu, Calif., February 18, 2012.
- “National Cathedral to National Gurdwara: Erecting American Religions in Washington, D.C.” Religion in Culture series, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, October 18, 2010.
- “Religious Architecture in the South.” Lecture in course “Myth, Ritual, and Magic: Religion and the South,” University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, October 18, 2010.
- “Religious Capital: Representing Religion in Washington, D.C. from Denominational to Post-Denominational America.” Religious History Colloquium, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn., April 21, 2010.
- “The Making of United Methodist Worship.” Charles Wesley and the Church Today: A Celebration of the 300th Anniversary of the Birth of Charles Wesley (1707-88) and of His Legacy to Christians in Our Time. Samford University, September 25, 2007.

BOOK REVIEWS

American Kairos: Washington National Cathedral and the New Civil Religion by Richard Benjamin Crosby, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. 93 (March 2025): 177–180. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/lfae043>.

America’s Book: The Rise and Decline of a Bible Civilization, 1794-1911 by Mark A. Noll. *Journal of Religious History* 48, no. 1 (March 2024): 92–94.
<http://www.doi.org/10.1111/1467-9809.13000>

Cambridge Companion to American Protestantism, ed. Jason E. Vickers and Jennifer Woodruff Tait, for Society for US Intellectual History. December 2023. <https://susih.org/category/usih-book-reviews/>

The Many Rooms of this House: Diversity in Toronto’s Places of Worship since 1840 by Roberto Perin. *Reviewing Religion*, November 6, 2018. <http://readingreligion.org/books/many-rooms-house>

Religion and Community in the New Urban America by Paul D. Numrich and Elfriede Wedam. *Reviewing Religion*, August 16, 2018. <http://readingreligion.org/books/religion-and-community-new-urban-america>

Theology and Form: Contemporary Orthodox Architecture in America by Nicholas Denysenko. *Reviewing Religion*, May 18, 2018, <http://readingreligion.org/books/theology-and-form>

The Whole Church Sings: Congregational Singing in Luther’s Wittenberg by Rohin A. Leaver. *Reviewing Religion*, September 8, 2017, <http://readingreligion.org/books/whole-church-sings>.

The Suburban Church: Modernism and Community in Postwar America by Gretchen Buggeln. *Annals of Iowa* 76 (2017): 368–70.

White Elephants on Campus: The Decline of the University Chapel in America, 1920-1960 by Margaret M. Grubiak. *American Catholic Studies* 126 (fall 2015): 83–85.

Temples for a Modern God: Religious Architecture in Postwar America by Jay M. Price. *Journal of Religion* 95 (January 2015): 148–49.

An Architecture of Immanence: Architecture for Worship and Ministry Today by Mark A. Torgerson. *Theology Today* 65 (January 2009): 531–33.

- Before Scopes: Evangelicalism, Education, and Evolution*, by Charles A. Israel. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 75 (March 2007): 150–53.
- Steel City Gospel: Protestant Laity and Reform in Progressive-Era Pittsburgh*, by Keith A. Zahniser, *Religious Studies Review* 32 (January 2006): 56.
- Religion, Education and the American Experience: Reflections on Religion and American Public Life*, edited by Edith L. Blumhofer. H-AmRel@h-net.msu.edu discussion list. July 2003. <http://www.h-net.msu.edu/reviews/>.
- The Visual Culture of American Religions*, edited by David Morgan and Sally M. Promey. *Religious Studies Review* 29 (April 2003): 207–8.
- Christianity in Appalachia*, edited by Bill L. Leonard. *Religious Studies Review* 29 (April 2003): 207.
- Aspiration: Birmingham's Historic Houses of Worship*, by John M. Schnorrenberg and Richard Payne. *Alabama Review* 55 (October 2002): 304–5.
- The Stone Carvers: Master Craftsmen of Washington National Cathedral*, by Marjorie Hunt. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 69 (September 2001): 710–12.
- “Schism and Faithfulness in the Churches of Christ.” Review of *The Churches of Christ in the Twentieth Century: Homer Hailey's Personal Journey of Faith*, by David Edwin Harrell, Jr. H-AmRel@h-net.msu.edu discussion list. June 2000. <http://www.h-net.msu.edu/reviews/>.
- Financing American Religion*, edited by Mark Chaves and Sharon L. Miller. *Religious Studies Review* 26 (July 2000): 298.
- Dictionary of Heresy Trials in American Christianity*, edited by George H. Shriver. *Church History* 67 (September 1998): 598–599.

TOURS OF RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE

- “Historic Churches in Boston’s Back Bay” Guided tour. (With Daniel Sack, Jonathon Eder, Barry Huff) Annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Boston, Massachusetts, November 24, 2025.
- “San Diego Historic Houses of Worship” (with Daniel Sack), Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, San Diego, Cal., November 25, 2024.
- “Spaces that Shape: How to Think About Places Christians Worship: A Tour of Three Churches in Birmingham.” Animate, Center for Worship & the Arts, Samford University, June 26, 2024.
- “Sacred Sites of San Antonio” (with Daniel Sack). Annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Denver, Col., November 20, 2023.
- “Moorish, Classical, and Modern: A Tour of Denver Houses of Worship” (with Daniel Sack). Annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Denver, Col., November 21, 2022.
- “Sacred Sites of San Diego” (with Daniel Sack). Annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, San Diego, Cal., November 25, 2019.
- “Churches of Oak Park, Illinois” (with Daniel Sack). Annual meeting of the American Society of Church History, Chicago, Ill., January 4, 2019.
- “Historic Houses of Worship in Denver” (with Daniel Sack). Annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion. Denver, Col., November 19, 2018.
- “Historic Houses of Worship in Boston’s Back Bay” (with Jeanne Halgren Kilde). Annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion. Boston, Mass., November 20, 2017.

- “San Antonio Historic Houses of Worship” (with Jeanne Halgren Kilde). Annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion. San Antonio, Tex., November 21, 2016.
- “Historic African American Churches of Atlanta” (with Daniel Sack). Annual meeting of the American Society of Church History. Atlanta, Ga., January 8, 2016.
- “Tour of Ponce de Leon Avenue Houses of Worship” (with Jeanne Halgren Kilde). Annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Atlanta, Ga., November 20, 2015.
- “Tour of Churches in Harlem and Morningside Heights” (with Daniel Sack). Annual meeting of the American Society of Church History. New York, N.Y., January 6, 2015.
- “Religious Architecture Tour” (with Jeanne Halgren Kilde and Rick Kennedy). Annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, San Diego, Calif., November 24, 2014.
- “National’ Houses of Worship” (with Daniel Sack and Peter W. Williams). Annual meeting of the American Society of Church History. Washington, D.C., January 3, 2014.
- “Historic Religious Architecture of Baltimore” (with Gretchen Townsend Buggeln and Jeanne Halgren Kilde). Annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Baltimore, Md., November 25, 2013.
- “Portland Houses of Worship” (with Charles Wallace). Spring meeting of the American Society of Church History. Portland, Ore., April 5, 2013.
- “Walking Tour of New Orleans Churches” (with Peter W. Williams), Annual meeting of the American Society of Church History. New Orleans, La., January 4, 2013.
- “The Churches of Chicago’s Ukrainian Village” (with Jeanne Kilde and Scott Kenworthy), Annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion. Chicago, Ill., November 19, 2012.
- “Religious Sites of San Francisco” (with Jeanne Kilde, Jonathan H.X. Lee, and Quincy Newall). Annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion. San Francisco, Calif., November 21, 2011.
- “Sacred and Religious Sites of Atlanta” (with Jeanne Kilde and Hazem Ziada). Annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion. Atlanta, Ga., November 1, 2010.
- Tour of First United Methodist Church and the Cathedral Church of the Advent, Birmingham, Ala. Historic Preservation (taught by Charles Ford), Samford University, November 2, 2009.
- “Washington Houses of Worship” (with Jeanne Kilde, Dewey Wallace, and Peter Williams). Annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion. Washington, D.C., November 20, 2006.
- “Boston Houses of Worship” (with Sally Promey and Peter W. Williams). Annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Boston, Mass., November 1999.

ON-CAMPUS RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS (Selected)

- “Understanding the Power of Samford’s Architecture.” Homecoming, October 27, 2023; Senior Reflections class, January, 17, 2024, January 22, 2025; Family Academy, February 29, 2024; and board of trustees’ spouses April 22, 2025.
- “Religious Capital: Representing Religion in Washington, D.C. from Denominational to Post-Denominational America.” Religion Colloquium, Samford University, Birmingham, Ala., December 1, 2009.
- “Corpses, Crypts, and Cash.” Religion Colloquium, Samford University, Birmingham, Ala., November 2007.
- “Campus as Sacred Space: Origins and Cultural Meanings Samford’s Colonial Revival Campus.” Faculty shop-talk, Samford University, October 2005.

“Conduits of Faith: Reinhold Niebuhr on Liturgy and the Church.” Faculty workshop on religion, Samford University, April 2001.

“Struggling to Unite the Church and the World: American Protestant Church Renewal, 1947-1968.” Harvard colloquium in American religious history, March 1995.

“Turning Outward: Mainline Protestant Approaches to Campus Ministry, 1950-1970.” Lilly research group conference, Harvard Divinity School, May 1994.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Professor, Samford University, 2011 to present.

Associate Professor, Samford University, 2005 to 2011.

Assistant Professor, Samford University, 1999 to 2005.

Courses Taught:

American Religious History

Biblical Perspectives

British Heritage and Culture (taught in London, England)

Core [Freshman] Seminar (entitled Communication Arts 102 until fall 2021) (topics)

Religious Images in Birmingham

Race and Religion in America

Religion, Race, and the City

Memorials

Icons & Memorials

Memorials & The Future

Christian Theology

Christian Worship: History and Theology

Congregational Song and Christian Community (honors seminar with Paul A. Richardson)

Contemporary Theology

Global Religion in a Global City: London (taught in London, England)

History of Christianity

Introduction to the New Testament

Introduction to World Religions

Method and Research (previously named Craft of Religious Studies and before that Research and Writing in Religious Studies)

Monarchs, Bishops, and Martyrs: The English Reformation (taught in London, England)

Race, Ethnicity, and Religion in America

Rituals and Myths in World Religions

Senior Religion Seminar (topics)

Church and Culture in America

Religion and American National Identity

Sacred Space

Religion in an Urban Place: Avondale

World Religions: Traditions in the Modern World

Teaching Fellow, Committee on the Study of Religion, Harvard University, spring 1996 to spring 1998.

Tutor, Committee on the Study of Religion, Harvard University, spring 1996.

GRANTS

“What Do These Stones Mean?: Cornerstones and Church Buildings.” Engaging Worship Grant, Center for Worship and the Arts, Samford University, 2024.

“Worship Architecture: An Ecumenical Introduction.” Engaging Worship Grant, Center for Worship and the Arts, Samford University, 2023.

“Race, Ethnicity, and Religion in America.” Course Development Grant, William E. and Wylodine H. Hull Fund for Christian Scholarship, Samford University, 2021.

Travel Grant, Office of the Provost, Samford University, 2018, 2019, 2022.

Faculty Development Grant, Samford University, 2010.

Research Grant, National City Christian Church, Washington, D.C. 2007.

Faculty Development Grant, Samford University, 2007.

“Teaching for Mission at Samford.” Department self-study, Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion, 2003-2005. Assisted in planning proposal.

Faculty Development Grant, Samford University, 2003-2004.

Institutional Renewal Grant, Rhodes Consultation on the Future of the Church-Related College, 2001-2003.

Rhodes Consultation on the Future of the Church-Related College, 2000–2001.

Dissertation Fellowship, Louisville Institute, 1998–1999.

Mellon Dissertation Research Fellowship, Harvard University, 1996.

Lilly Endowment Fellowship, Harvard University, 1993–1995.

MAJOR WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS ATTENDED

Institute on General Education and Assessment, American Association of Colleges and Universities, May 31 to June 3, 2017, Loyola University, Chicago.

Faculty Publishing Workshop. Council of Christian Colleges and Universities, Abilene Christian University, Abilene, Texas, June 5 to 9, 2011.

Dialogue Trip to Turkey. Istanbul Center for Culture and Dialogue. June 1 to 10, 2007.

“The Transformation of Christian Worship: Recent History of Protestant and Catholic Practices (1960-2000).” Calvin Seminars in Christian Scholarship, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich., June 26 to July 7, 2006.

“The Convening University.” Office of the Provost, Samford University, London, England, May 21 to 27, 2005.

“Teaching Theology through Music.” Notre Dame Institute for Church Life and the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion, Syracuse, Ind., May 23 to June 4, 2004.

ON-CAMPUS FACULTY DEVELOPMENT SEMINARS

“Level-Up: Transformative Learning through Powerful Assignments.” Faculty cohort 2021–22.

“Faculty Reading Group on Anti-Racist Pedagogy,” Howard College of Arts and Sciences, Samford University, 2020–21.

SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION

President, Samford Chapter of the American Association of University Professors, 2024 to present.

Treasurer, Samford Chapter of the American Association of University Professors, 2019–2024.

Selection committee member, *Christianity Today* book awards for history/biography, 2021.

Co-chair, Space, Place and Religion Group, American Academy of Religion, 2014–2016.

Prize committee, Albert Clark Undergraduate Essay Award, Theta Alpha Kappa, February 2012.

Co-chair, Space, Place, and Religious Meaning Consultation, American Academy of Religion, 2013, steering committee member 2007–2013.

Selection committee member, Dissertation Fellowship Program. Louisville Institute, 2007.

Host (with Penny L. Marler). Southeastern Religion Discussion Group, September 2003.

Manuscript Reviewer. *Church History, Material Religion, Journal of the American Academy of Religion, Religion and American Culture, Religions, Journal of Geography in Higher Education, Religions*, Fortress, McGraw-Hill, Oxford University Press, Routledge, Wadsworth-Thompson, University Press of Kansas.

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

Administration

Interim chair, Department of Religion, 2015–2018.

Acting chair, Department of Religion, summer 2002, August & September 2011, fall 2013.

Acting co-chair, Department of Religion, fall 2006.

Assistant chair, Department of Religion, 2001–02.

Webmaster, Department of Religion 1999–2006.

Faculty Governance

Vice-speaker, Howard College Faculty Assembly, 2024–2025

Curriculum committee, Howard College of Arts and Sciences; member 2002–2005, chair 2004–2005, 2022–2025, chair 2024–25

Faculty Senate, December 2004–May 2008, 2014–2016, 2024–2027

Search committee, Department of Biblical & Religious Studies, 2021, 2024 to 2025.

Search committees, Departments of Religion and Philosophy, 1999–2007, 2011–2015.

Campus Life Committee, 2020–2023

Piano faculty search committee, School of the Arts, fall 2020.

Promotion and Tenure Committee, Department of Communication Studies and Journalism and Mass Communication, fall 2019.

General Education Committee, chair, Feb. 2015–May 2018.

Faculty Handbook Committee, 2014–2017, chair 2017.

Preministerial Scholars selection committee, 2008–2017.

Provost's *ad hoc* Committee on General Education Assessment, July to December 2016.

Strategic Planning Task Force, Howard College of Arts and Sciences, January 2016–November 2016.

Faculty Development and Evaluation committee, Howard College of Arts and Sciences, 2011–2014, co-chair 2013–2014.

Ad-hoc committee on General Education, Samford University, December 2009 to 2013.

University Fellows selection committee, reader, December 2009, interviewer January 2017.

Honors Council, 2008–2010.

Core Curriculum anniversary committee, fall 2006.
“Teaching for Mission,” 15-month self-study program, Department of Religion, 2003–2005.
Phi Beta Kappa Application Committee, secretary 2000–2001; member 2003–04.
Convener, faculty discussion groups. Rhodes Consultation on the Future of the Church-Related College, Samford University, May 2000 to May 2003.
Work included writing a research report: “History of Samford University’s Statement on Academic Freedom,” spring 2002.
Consultant, Theological Exploration of Vocation Grant Application committee, spring 2002.
Theological Exploration of Vocation Planning Grant Application committee, fall 2001.

Faculty Development Presentation

Developing a Book Prospective: Lessons Learned from Faculty Publishing Worship (with Tom Woolley and Lee Farquhar). Samford University, October 25, 2011.

Student Life—Longer-term Activities

Membership Secretary, Alpha Iota Epsilon Chapter, Theta Kappa Alpha, national honor society for religious studies. Spring 2020 to present.

“Scripture and Our World Today: Wesleyan / Methodist Reflections.” Led eight-week student cadre, Office of Spiritual Life, August to November 2024.

“Saintliness.” Led eight-week student cadre, Office of Spiritual Life, January to March 2024.

“Anglican and Episcopal Christianity.” Led eight-week student cadre, Office of Spiritual Life, August to October 2023.

“Hymns, Worship Songs, and Theology.” Led eight-week student cadre, Office of Spiritual Life, January to March 2023.

Founding Moderator, Alpha Iota Epsilon Chapter, Theta Kappa Alpha, national honor society for religious studies. November 2007 to May 2013.

“Christian Unity and Diversity” (with Karen Ann Lortscher, O.S.B.). Led eight-week student cadre, University Ministries, February to March 2009.

“Exploring Catholicism” (with Karen Ann Lortscher, O.S.B.). Led eight-week student cadre, University Ministries, September to October 2007.

College Society Mentor, 2006 to 2008.

“Exploring Catholicism” (with Karen Ann Lortscher, O.S.B.). Led eight-week student cadre, University Ministries, September to October 2006.

“The University and Christianity.” Led eight-week student cadre, University Ministries, September to October, 2005.

“Liturgy.” Led spiritual formation group reading Alexander Schmemann, *For the Life of the World*, fall 2021.

SERVICE TO COMMUNITY

Committees

Historic Preservation Commission, City of Homewood, Alabama, 2024–present.

Question Writing Team for History of the Christian Church, General Board of Examining Chaplains, The Episcopal Church, 2023–present.

Invited Lectures, Presentations, and Classes since 2006

- “Ecumenical Councils and the Architecture of Christian Worship.” Aldersgate Class, Canterbury United Methodist Church, January 18, 2026.
- “Reading Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Scriptures in Parallel.” Cartwright Class, Trinity United Methodist Church, Homewood, November 2025 (2 sessions).
- “Jesus on Sixth Avenue North: An Introduction to Stained Glass in Birmingham.” St. Martha’s Guild, All Saints’ Episcopal Church, Homewood, September 15, 2025.
- “Understanding the Architecture of Birmingham’s Houses of Worship.” New Horizons at UAB, May 3, 2025.
- “Tour of the Prayer Book,” presentation for adult confirmation class at All Saints’ Episcopal Church, April 7, 2024.
- “Understanding Islam,” St. Martha’s Guild, All Saints’ Episcopal Church, October 16, 2023.
- “Birmingham’s Religious Landscape.” Explorers class, All Saints’ Episcopal Church, Homewood,, September 10 & 17, 2023.
- “Eucharist and Paschal Mystery.” All Saints’ Episcopal Church, Homewood, April 23, 2023.
- “The Creeds: Origins.” All Saints’ Episcopal Church, Homewood, March 5, 2023.
- “Asian Religious Sites in London.” St. Martha’s Guild, All Saints’ Episcopal Church, Homewood, January 16, 2023.
- “Washington, D.C.: A Center for Religious Pilgrimage,” St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, Vestavia Hills, Ala., January 15, 2022.
- “African American Churches and Birmingham’s Religious Landscape.” St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, Vestavia Hills, Ala., October 23 and 30, 2022.
- “Episcopal Campus Ministry at Samford.” Faith and Contemporary Issues Class, All Saints’ Episcopal Church, Homewood, Ala., September 19, 2022.
- “Advent, Isaiah, and Our Jewish Neighbors,” four-week series, Philos Class, Trinity United Methodist Church, Homewood, Ala., November, December 2021.
- “Architecture for Worship: A Brief Introduction to Reading Liturgical Architecture.” St. Martha’s Guild. All Saints’ Episcopal Church, Homewood, Ala., January 14, 2019.
- “Introduction to Islam.” St. Martha’s Guild. All Saints’ Episcopal Church, Homewood, Ala. April 16, 2018.
- “Star Wars and Daoism.” Faith and the Modern Family, All Saints’ Episcopal Church, Homewood, Ala. February 25, 2018.
- “Christian Theology.” Four weeks. Clark Center for Theological Studies. Canterbury United Methodist Church, Mountain Brook, Ala. October, November, December 2017.
- “History of Christianity 101.” Nine-week series. Clark Center for Theological Studies. Canterbury United Methodist Church, Mountain Brook, Ala. March to May 2017.
- “Job: Wrestling with God.” Four-week series. Grace Episcopal Church, Cullman, Ala. Lent, 2015.
- “The History of Church Architecture.” Four-week series. Seekers class, All Saints’ Episcopal Church, Homewood, Ala. September, October 2014.
- “Revolutions in Worship.” Four-week series, Episcopal Church of the Holy Apostles, Hoover, Ala., November 2013.
- “Samaritans: Their History and Religion.” Canterbury United Methodist Church, Mountain Brook, Ala., July 14, 2013.
- “Modernity and Church Architecture.” Two-week series, Seekers class, All Saints’ Episcopal Church, Homewood, Ala. October 14-21, 2012.

- “Religion and Presidential Candidates.” Three-week series, ASCEND class, Trinity United Methodist Church, Homewood, Ala. September 16 to 30, 2012.
- “Dietrich Bonhoeffer.” Three-week series, Canterbury Academy, Canterbury United Methodist Church, Mountain Brook, Ala., April 1 to 22, 2012.
- “Religion and American National Identity: Reflections on its Early History.” Old Elyton Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, Birmingham, Ala., March 27, 2012.
- “Introduction to World Religions.” Eleven-week series, Canterbury Academy, Canterbury United Methodist Church, Mountain Brook, Ala. September 11 to December 11, 2011.
- “Some Historical Reflections on Christianity and American Identity.” Canterbury United Methodist Church, Mountain Brook, Ala. July 2, 2011.
- “Recent Trends in Protestant Worship.” Independent Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, Ala., January 15, 2011.
- “Thomas Aquinas” and “Martin Luther.” Six-week series, Canterbury Academy, Canterbury United Methodist Church, Mountain Brook, Ala. September 19 to October 24, 2010.
- “Holy Communion,” Three-week series, Aldersgate class, Trinity United Methodist Church, Homewood, Ala., Oct. 3 to 17, 2010.
- “Matthew.” Four-week series, Fellowship class, Trinity United Methodist Church, September 2010.
- “The Restoration of Jerusalem.” Four-week series, Fellowship class, Trinity United Methodist Church, April 2010.
- “Augustine” and “Luther.” Six-week series, Canterbury Academy, Canterbury United Methodist Church, January 25 to March 31, 2010.
- “What Really Happened in the First Great Awakening.” Independent Presbyterian Church, January 10 & 17, 2010.
- Religious Diversity Training. Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Clanton, Alabama, September 18, 2009
- “Job.” Four-week series, Fellowship class, Trinity United Methodist Church, September 2009.
- “Holy Communion.” Four-week series, ASCEND class, Trinity United Methodist Church, March and April 2009.
- “Jesus,” “Crucified, Buried, Descended,” and “Forgiveness of Sins” Three sessions in survey of Christian theology, Canterbury Academy for Christian Studies, Canterbury United Methodist Church, Mountain Brook, Ala., February – April 2009.
- “Paul Continued” Three-session series, Fellowship class, Trinity United Methodist Church, February 2009.
- “Encountering Religious Diversity.” Two-week series, South Highland Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, Ala., January 21-28, 2009
- Matthew 25:31-46, Biblical Interpretation course, Canterbury Academy for Christian Studies, Canterbury United Methodist Church, Mountain Brook, Ala., November 16, 2008.
- Matthew 22: 1-10, Biblical Interpretation course, Canterbury Academy for Christian Studies, Canterbury United Methodist Church, Mountain Brook, Ala., October 26, 2008.
- “Key Events in the History of Christianity.” Three-week series, Cartwright Discussion Group, Trinity United Methodist Church, October 2008.
- “Paul.” Four-week series, Fellowship class, Trinity United Methodist Church, September 2008.
- “Religious Diversity.” Montgomery Office, Alabama Gas Corporation, March 28, 2008.
- “Ezekiel.” Four-week series, Fellowship class, Trinity United Methodist Church, February 2008.

- “Understanding the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” Two-week series, Men’s Bible class, Vestavia Hills Baptist Church, January 27 and –February 3, 2008.
- “The Black Madonna: Image and Icon.” Panelist for “Third Thursday” Program at Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, December 20, 2007.
- “Understanding Your Protestant Neighbors.” Two-session series, St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic Campus Ministry Center, November 2007.
- “Makers of United Methodist Worship,” Five-week series, Fellowship class, TUMC, September 2007.

Other Community Activities

- Faculty Volunteer. Birmingham Episcopal Campus Ministry, 2008–2022.
- Finalist, Viewer’s Choice Award, Chesapeake Bay Foundation photo contest, June 2010.
- Participant. Annual Interfaith Dialogue Dinners, Istanbul Center, and Peace Valley Foundation, Birmingham, Alabama, 2006–2010.
- Member. Class of 1993 Reunion Committee. University of Virginia Alumni Association, 2007 to 2008.
- Aided EHT Traceries, Inc. in historic preservation research on 1853 church building in Washington, D.C. now occupied by Chinese Community Church. Findings featured in Sue Anne Pressley Montes, “Church Tie to Capitol Architect Revealed,” *Washington Post*, August 28, 2007, B1, B3.
- Member, Administrative Board, Trinity United Methodist Church, Homewood, Ala., 2003 to 2005.

Professional Blog

Chasing Churches and Other Pursuits of Religion in America www.chasingchurches.com.

Launched September 2018.

Selected widely viewed posts:

- “Samford, a ‘Southern Baptist Institution’?” October 30, 2021.
- “Church Schisms in Birmingham, Alabama,” July 19, 2021.
- “Worship: Experience or Service?” April 14, 2021.
- “‘Read, Mark, Learn, and Inwardly Digest:’ A Guide to Reading More than the Bible.” July 21, 2020.
- “Race and Two Obelisks in Birmingham.” June 1, 2020.
- “Third Woman to Serve as a Bishop in North Alabama.” January 19, 2020.
- “Episcopal Bishop-Elect Moves Her Consecration from Catholic Church after Protest.” January 18, 2020.
- “Bidding Prayer at Nine Lessons and Carols: A Milder Version from 1992.” December 19, 2019.
- “The Bidding Prayer at Nine Lessons and Carols: Innovation and Variations.” July 27, 2019.
- “Lord, in this hour, . . .”: Words for Samford’s Westminster Chimes.” June 23, 2019.
- “St. Paul’s Episcopal Church - Closing after almost Seven Score Years.” May 19, 2019.
- “Slavery, ‘Servants,’ and Samford.” February 13, 2019.

“President and Mrs. Trump Attend Christmas Eve Service at Washington National Cathedral,” December 25, 2018.

“The Apostles’ Creed Has a Big Day, Thanks to the Trumps’ Silence.” December 6, 2018.

“Matthew Shepard and the History of the Interment the Dead in Washington National Cathedral.” October 13, 2018.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Academy of Religion

American Society of Church History

Historical Society of the Episcopal Church

Mercersburg Society

North American Academy of Liturgy

Theta Alpha Kappa, National Honor Society for Religious Studies and Theology

Updated January 26, 2026.