



**JAMES P. BYRD**

Professor of American Religious History  
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**EDUCATION**

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY, Nashville, Tennessee

PH.D., M.A. (1999, 1997)

Religion; Major Area: American Religious History; Minor Area: Theological Ethics

DUKE UNIVERSITY, Durham, North Carolina

M.Div. (1991, *magna cum laude*)

GARDNER-WEBB COLLEGE, Boiling Springs, North Carolina

B.A. (1988, *magna cum laude*)

Double Major: Religion, English; Minor: Classical Languages

**PUBLICATIONS**

Books (single-authored)

*A Holy Baptism of Fire and Blood: The Bible and the American Civil War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2021. <https://amzn.to/3kPNJgh>

Review, *Wall Street Journal*, <http://on.wsj.com/3kCwgIg>

Review, *Kirkus*, <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/james-p-byrd/a-holy-baptism-of-fire-and-blood/>

*Sacred Scripture, Sacred War: The Bible and the American Revolution*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. <https://amzn.to/3fXhuIk> News and Reviews:

Review, *Journal of American History*, <http://goo.gl/z28NLU>

*Washington Post*, "Was the American Revolution a Holy War?"  
<http://goo.gl/sw1mjj>

*Christian Century*, "War Sermons," <http://goo.gl/06Yq3N>

*Christian Century*, "When the Founders Looked to Moses" [goo.gl/ijQVAd](http://goo.gl/ijQVAd)

Review, *Christian Century*, <http://goo.gl/OAJPNY>

Review, *Religion in American History* blog <http://goo.gl/jufQoR>

*Christianity Today* names *Sacred Scripture, Sacred War* one of the top books of the year, <http://goo.gl/W5022b>

Review, *Christianity Today* <http://goo.gl/NNPN1L>

*Jonathan Edwards for Armchair Theologians*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008. Japanese edition, はじめての・ジョナサン・エドワーズ, translated by Anri Morimoto, 2011.

*The Challenges of Roger Williams: Religious Liberty, Violent Persecution, and the Bible*. Macon: Mercer University Press, 2002.

#### Books under Contract

*"Our Beloved Martyred President': The Assassination and Sacred Legacy of Abraham Lincoln*, under contract with Oxford University Press.

*The Story of American Religion*, co-authored with James Hudnut-Beumler, under contract with Westminster John Knox Press, scheduled for publication, Fall 2021.

### Book Chapters

“Jonathan Edwards, War, and the Bible,” in *Jonathan Edwards and Scripture: Biblical Exegesis in British North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

“We Can If We Will: Regeneration and Benevolence,” in *After Jonathan Edwards: The Courses of the New England Theology*, edited by Oliver D. Crisp and Douglas A. Sweeney (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

“Persecution and Polemics: Baptists and the Shaping of the Roger Williams Tradition in the Nineteenth Century” in *Through a Glass Darkly: Contested Notions of Baptist Identity*, edited by Keith Harper (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2012).

“The 'New World' of North America and Canada and the Globalization of Critical Biblical Scholarship,” in *The Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation. Vol. III, From Modernism to Post-Modernism: the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, edited by Magne Saeboe (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht), 2013.

"Charting a New Vision: The School of Religion," in *Vanderbilt Divinity School: Education, Contest, and Change* (Vanderbilt University Press, 2001), edited by Dale A. Johnson.

### Book Chapter in Process

“Jonathan Edwards’s Reception in the United States,” *Oxford Handbook of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press), **forthcoming**.

### Encyclopedias

Section editor, *Encyclopedia of Christianity in the United States*, edited by George Thomas Kurian and Mark A. Lamport (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).

“Baptist Tradition and Heritage” (lead article, 10000 words) in *Encyclopedia of Religion in America* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2010).

*The Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

- Articles: Christianity in the United States (lead article), Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Roger Williams, Francis Asbury, Charles Hodge, Plymouth Brethren and their Theology

## Reviews and Review Essays

Joel Baden, *The Book of Exodus: A Biography* (Princeton, 2019) in *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture*, forthcoming.

Mark A. Noll, *In the Beginning was the Word: The Bible in American Public Life, 1492-1783* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015) in *The Journal of Church and State*, Vol. 60, Issue 2, 1 May 2018, Pages 347-349, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcs/csy024>

Lincoln Mullen, *America's Public Bible: Biblical Quotations in U.S. Newspapers*, digital humanities review, *Journal of American History*, Vol. 104, Issue 4, 1 March 2018, Pages 1097-1098, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jahist/jax556>

Edward R. Crowther and Keith Harper, editors, *Between Fetters and Freedom: African American Baptists since Emancipation* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2015) in *The Civil War Book Review* Vol. 18 : Iss. 4 , Article 4 (2016).

James P. Byrd and Alan Murphy, "Keep John Brown Weird: Moral History without Facile Moralizing," a review essay on Ted A. Smith, *Weird John Brown: Divine Violence and the Limits of Ethics* (Stanford University Press, 2014) in *Syndicate Theology* (August 1, 2016). <https://syndicate.network/symposia/theology/weird-john-brown/>

S. Scott Rohrer, *Jacob Green's Revolution: Radical Religion and Reform in a Revolutionary Age* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014) in *The American Historical Review* 2015 120 (5): 1882-1883.

Reiner Smolinski and Jan Stievermann, Ed., *Cotton Mather and Biblia Americana: America's First Bible Commentary, Essays in Reappraisal* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012) in *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture*, Vol. 82, Iss. 2, (Jun 2013): 463-465.

Bill J. Leonard, *Baptists in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005) in *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* 77.3 (September 2008): 778-780.

Charles A. Israel, *Before Scopes: Evangelicalism, Education, and Evolution in Tennessee, 1870-1925* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004) in *The Journal of American History* 93.2 (September 2006): 564.

Edwin S. Gaustad, *Roger Williams* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2005) in *The Christian Century* 123.7 (April 4, 2006): 48-50 .

D. G. Hart, *That Old-Time Religion in Modern America: Evangelical Protestantism in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2002) in *The Journal of American History* 91.2 (September 2004): 720-721 .

William E. Phipps, *Amazing Grace in John Newton: Slave Ship Captain, Hymn-writer, and Abolitionist* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2001) in *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* 71.4 (December 2002): 902-904.

Jon Butler, *Becoming America: The Revolution before 1776*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000) in *Fides et Historia*, 34.1 (Winter/Spring 2002): 167-169.

Leonard L. Bethel and Frederick A. Johnson, *Plainfield's African-American: From Northern Slavery to Church Freedom* (New York: University Press of America, 1998) in *Church History* 68.3 (September 1999): 738.

Jon Butler and Harry S. Stout, *Religion in American History : A Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Mark G. Toulouse and James O. Duke, *Makers of Christian Theology in America* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997); George H. Shriver, ed., *Dictionary of Heresy Trials in American Christianity* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1997); in *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 26.1 (Spring 1999), 103.

Abraham Friesen, *Erasmus, the Anabaptists, and the Great Commission* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998) in *The Concordia Theological Quarterly* 63.1 (January 1999): 60-62.

## PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

“The Bible in the American Revolution and the American Civil War. A Comparison with Selected Texts,” presentation at “The Bible and Political Thought.” Conference Held at the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome, Italy, September 27–28, 2018. Presented via Skype.

Panelist, “Roundtable Discussion: The Bible in American Cultural and Political History,” at the national meeting of the American Historical Association, January 5, 2018.

“Jonathan Edwards, War, and the Bible,” presentation at the session, “Jonathan Edwards and Scripture” at the national meeting of the American Society of Church History, January 4, 2018.

American Society of Church History national meeting: Respondent, “The Body Social and Socialized Bodies,” January 6, 2018.

Chair, “The Nineteenth-Century American Scriptural Imagination: Three Case Studies,” at the national meeting of the American Society of Church History, January, 2016.

Panelist, “Doubting the Democratization Thesis: A Roundtable Discussion of Amanda Porterfield’s *Conceived in Doubt: Religion and Politics in the New American Nation*,” at the national meeting of the American Society of Church History, Washington, D.C., January 3, 2014. Other panelists: Mark A. Noll, University of Notre Dame; Kathryn Gin Lum, Stanford University; Michael J. Altman, Emory University; chair: Kate Carté Engel, Southern Methodist University.

“Baptists and the Shaping of Early American Politics,” invited lecture at the conference, *Baptists and the Shaping of American Culture*, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, October 13, 2012.

“War in the New England Soul,” presentation at the session, “Harry S. Stout’s New England Soul After 25 Years” at the national meeting of the American Society of Church History, Chicago, Illinois, January 6, 2012. Other panelists: Mark A. Noll, University of Notre Dame, Thomas S. Kidd, Baylor University; Catherine A. Brekus, The University of Chicago Divinity School; Kenneth Minkema, Yale University; Respondent: Harry S. Stout, Yale University.

American Historical Association: Respondent – “Religion, War, and the Formation of an American Identity,” Chicago, Illinois, January 7, 2012.

“The King James Bible and Colonial American Patriotism,” presentation at the session, “The Bible and the American Founding” at the conference, *The King James Bible and the World it Made*, Baylor University, April 9, 2011.

“Religion, War, and America: Reflections on 9/11 and Religious Patriotism,” Convocation address, Vanderbilt University Divinity School, August, 2011.

Selected to participate in *Religion, War, and the Meaning of America*, a grant-funded faculty seminar directed by Professor Harry S. Stout of Yale University. Calvin College, June-July, 2010.

"King David in Colonial America: Spiritual Valor and Military Heroism in Eighteenth-Century War Sermons," presentation in the session, "America's Wars and American Religion" at the national meeting of the American Society of Church History, New York City, New York, January 3, 2009.

"Biblical Violence as Sacred: The Song of Deborah (Judges 5) in Eighteenth-Century War Sermons," Presentation at *Religion & Violence in Early America*, a conference sponsored by the Yale University School of Graduate Studies and the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, in cooperation with the Jonathan Edwards Center and the Initiative on Religion and Politics, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, April 11-12, 2008.

"God in Country Music Videos," Presentation at the God in Music City event, sponsored by the Center for the Study of Religion and Culture at Vanderbilt University, April 2, 2008. (Collaborative presentation with James Hudnut-Beumler).

"Baptists from the Anti-Mission Movement," Presentation at the Center for Baptist Studies, Baptist Classics Seminar, Mercer University, Macon, Georgia, September 9, 2005.

"Baptists, Ordination, and Respectability in Revolutionary America: Reflections on Isaac Eaton's Qualifications, Characters, and Duties of a Good Minister," Presentation at the Center for Baptist Studies, Baptist Classics Seminar, Mercer University, Macon, Georgia, September 9, 2004.

"Selected Themes in Richard Knight's *History of the General or Six Principle Baptists in Europe and North America*," Presentation at the Center for Baptist Studies, Baptist Classics Seminar, Mercer University, Macon, Georgia, September 5, 2003.

Featured lecturer, Duke University Divinity School, celebration of the fifteenth anniversary of the Baptist House of Studies, February 27-28, 2004. Lectures:

"Introducing Roger Williams: Baptist Citizenship in a Puritan World" and "Interpreting Roger Williams: The Power of the State and the Authority of the Bible."

"Baptist History and Activism in the Life of Morgan Edwards," presentation at the panel discussion, "Reconsidering Morgan Edwards and The Customs of Primitive Churches," Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion, Chattanooga, Tennessee, March 13 -14, 2003.

"The Attraction of Hell: Reading *Paradise Lost* through the Theology of Jonathan Edwards," presentation at the Reformed Theology and History Group, American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Toronto, Ontario, 25 November 2002.

"American Religious History and Technology: Resources and Strategies for the Classroom," presentation at the Southeast Regional meeting of the National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion, McAfee School of Theology, Mercer University, Atlanta, GA, March, 2002.

"Roger Williams, American Puritans, and St. Paul: The Problem of Civil Authority," presentation at the Theology and Social Theory session, College Theology Society Annual Convention, Villanova University, Villanova, PA, 2 June, 2000.

"Roger Williams's Apocalyptic Struggle against Christendom: A Radical Reading of Revelation 17," presentation at the History of Christianity section, American Academy of Religion SE Regional Meeting, Chapel Hill, NC, 15 March 1999.

"Roger Williams Among the Wheat and the Tares: Scripture and Religious Liberty in Puritan New England," presentation at the American Biblical Hermeneutics section, American Academy of Religion SE Regional Meeting, Knoxville, TN, March, 1998.

## **EMPLOYMENT**

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY DIVINITY SCHOOL AND GRADUATE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION

Associate Professor of American Religious History (tenured, 2013-)

Associate Dean for Graduate Education and Research (2007-present)

Assistant Dean and Director of Graduate Studies (2003 - 2007)

Assistant Professor of American Religious History (tenure-track, 2007-2013)

Senior Lecturer in American Religious History (2003 - 2006)

Lecturer in American Religious History (1999-2003)

## **COURSES TAUGHT: VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY**

### **CURRENT ROTATION:**

- Religion, Slavery, and the Civil War
- History of Global Christianity, II (with James Hudnut-Beumler)
- Baptist History and Heritage



- History of Religion in America
- Religion and War in American History
- Theology in America: 1630-1865
- History of the United Methodist Tradition
- American Revivals
- Theology of Jonathan Edwards
- American Apocalyptic Thought and Movements

**PREVIOUS ROTATIONS:**

- The Historiography of American Religion (with Kathleen Flake and James Hudnut-Beumler)
- Formation of the Christian Tradition (with James Hudnut-Beumler)
- Puritan Movement in New England
- Themes in American Religious History

**PEER REVIEW OF MANUSCRIPTS**

Oxford University Press

Yale University Press

Journal of American History

William and Mary Quarterly

Blackwell Publishing

Mercer University Press

**HONORS, MEMBERSHIPS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES**

Assistant Executive Secretary, National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion,  
1998 - 2017

Program Committee, American Society of Church History, 2018-

Council member, American Society of Church History, 2011-2014

Gallery of Distinguished Alumni, Gardner-Webb University, elected in Fall, 2010

Chair, 2008 meeting of the National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion panels: "Church History II and III," Belmont University, Nashville, Tennessee, May 18-20, 2008.

Section chair, 2006, Religion in America, American Academy of Religion Southeast Regional and The Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion. Proposed and implemented sessions on the following topics: Religion and Popular Culture, Pentecostalism, Protestant Identities and the American Religious Marketplace, and Gender, Rhetoric, and Ethnography: Method in American Religion. Atlanta, Georgia, March 10-12, 2008

Chair, 2005 meeting of the American Academy of Religion Southeast Regional meeting (SECSOR) panel: "Protestant Identities in the American Religious Marketplace," Atlanta, Georgia, March 12, 2006.

Moderator, panel discussion on "'The 1845 Constitution of the SBC' and 'An Address to the Public,'" the Center for Baptist Studies, Baptist Classics Seminar, Mercer University, Macon, Georgia, September 10, 2005.

Chair, 2005 meeting of the American Academy of Religion Southeast Regional meeting (SECSOR) panel: "Strategic Uses of Religion in Southern Race Politics," Wake Forest University, Winston Salem, North Carolina, March 12, 2005.

Chair and respondent, 2005 annual meeting of the American Society of Church History session: "Conversion and Identity Construction in American Religious History," Seattle, Washington, January 9, 2005.

Moderator, panel discussion of James Simms's *The First Colored Baptist Church in North America* (1888), the Center for Baptist Studies, Baptist Classics Seminar, Mercer University, Macon, Georgia, September 11, 2004.

Moderator, American Material Christianity panel, Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion, Chattanooga, Tennessee, March 13 -14, 2003.

"College Theology Society and National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion Share Meeting" in *The Council of Societies for the Study of Religion Bulletin* (25.1-2, 1996): 3-4. Co-authored with Richard F. Wilson.

Session Chair, American Academy of Religion SE Region, "Religion in America," 2005 - 2006

Member, American Society of Church History, 1991 - present

Member, American Academy of Religion

## SERVICE ASSIGNMENTS

*(All assignments current, unless otherwise indicated)*

- Search committee, Dean of the Graduate School, Vanderbilt University, Fall 2020.
- Review panel for Vanderbilt Trans-institutional Programs grants (TIPs), 2016-present
- Humanities and A&S Historic Core Trans-Institutional Capital Planning Advisory Committee (Provost Office, 2018- )
- Faculty Working Group on Graduate Education and the Humanities (Graduate School, 2018-)
- Faculty point person, Vanderbilt Divinity School building project, 2014-
- Graduate Faculty Council (committee comprised of chairs of all departments in the Graduate School), Graduate School, 2016-
- Executive Committee of Graduate Faculty Council, Graduate School, 2016-
- Co-director, Pedagogical Mentoring for Diverse Institutional Contexts, a grant funded through the Wabash Center, Graduate Department of Religion, 2017-2019
- Policy and Personnel (*ex-officio*), Divinity School, 2016-
- Search committee, faculty position, Early Christian History, 2012
- Honor Council Faculty Advisor (Graduate School), 2010-2011
- Academic Programs (Divinity School), chair, 2008-2009
- Academic Planning (Divinity School)
- Graduate Faculty Delegate Assembly (Graduate School)
- Graduate Development Network (Graduate School)
- Grant and Fellowship Workshop coordinating committee (Graduate School, 2007-2008)
- ATS Self Study - Steering committee (Divinity School, 2004-05)
- Theology and Practice steering committee (Divinity School and GDR)

- Digital Library Advisory Board (Vanderbilt University)
- Graduate Program and Admissions Committee (Graduate Department of Religion)
- Excalibur Policy Group (committee overseeing the graduate online admission system, Graduate School)
- Divinity School Task Force: "Expanding the School of the Prophets: A Vision of Multicultural Inclusion, Education, and Ministry," a grant funded through the Wabash Center (2006-2008)
- Faculty search committee (Ethics, 2002)
- Course Management System Task Force
- Campus email system task force (2000)
- Dissertation Enhancement Grant evaluation committee (2005-06, Graduate School)
- Honors Fellowship evaluator (subcommittee of Graduate Faculty Council, Graduate School)
- Information Technology Senior School Leaders (Vanderbilt University)
- VUmail replacement task force
- Faculty Database Steering Committee (Vanderbilt University)

REFERENCES (Available upon request)

*Updated: March 2021*