

BRAD VERMURLEN

Docent Research Group
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[Revised February 26, 2018]

EDUCATION

- Ph.D. University of Notre Dame, Sociology, 2016
Dissertation: *Reformed Resurgence: A Field-Theoretic Analysis of Religious Strength (and Weakness) in Advanced Modernity.*
Committee: David Sikkink (chair), Christian Smith, Omar Lizardo, Kraig Beyerlein
Area Exams: Sociology of Religion and Sociological Theory
- M.A. University of Notre Dame, Sociology, 2010
Thesis: *The Good Life: Christianity and Consumerism Among Emerging Adults*
- B.A. University of Michigan–Ann Arbor, Sociology, 2008
With Highest Honors, Highest Distinction, and Phi Beta Kappa
Minor: Philosophy

EMPLOYMENT

- 2016-Present Director of Social Research, Docent Research Group
2009-2015 Research Team Leader, Docent Research Group
2008-2013 Presidential Fellow, University of Notre Dame

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Sociology of Religion	Emerging Adulthood	Protestant Theology
Social Movements	Philosophy of Social Science	Philosophical Anthropology
Sociological Theory	Organizations	Leadership
Culture	Cognitive Sociology	Moral Philosophy/Ethics

PUBLICATIONS

Peer Reviewed Articles

- 2016 Brad Vermurlen. "Structural Overlap and the Management of Cultural Marginality: The Case of Calvinist Hip-Hop." *American Journal of Cultural Sociology* 4(1): 68-106.

Non-Peer Reviewed Articles

- Forth. Brad Vermurlen. Entry on “Doctrine.” Forthcoming in *The Sage Encyclopedia of Theory*. Edited by James Mattingly. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Forth. Brad Vermurlen. Entry on “Assumption.” Forthcoming in *The Sage Encyclopedia of Theory*. Edited by James Mattingly. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- 2015 Brad Vermurlen. “Perceptions of and Objections to Christianity Among Unchurched and Dechurched Adults.” *Review of Religious Research* 57(1): 161-162.

Research Reports

- 2017 Brad Vermurlen and Todd Ferguson. *A Sociological Overview of the State of American Religion, especially Evangelicalism*. Austin, TX: Docent Research Group, 42 pp.
- 2015 Brad Vermurlen, Jeremy Uecker, and Kimberly Samuel. *Do Specialty Services Make a Difference in Evangelical Churches?* Austin, TX: Docent Research Group, 18 pp.
- 2014 Brad Vermurlen. *Perceptions of and Objections to Christianity among Unchurched and Dechurched Adults*. Austin, TX: Docent Research Group, 89 pp.

Book Reviews

- 2017 Brad Vermurlen. Review of: *Fundamental Concepts in Max Weber’s Sociology of Religion*. By Christopher S. Adair-Toteff. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 53(2): 210-211.
- 2015 Brad Vermurlen. Review of: *American Civil Religion: What Americans Hold Sacred*. By Peter Gardella. New York: Oxford University Press. *Review of Religious Research* 57(2): 321-322.
- 2013 Brad Vermurlen. Review of: *God, Freedom, and Human Dignity: Embracing a God-Centered Identity in a Me-Centered Culture*. By Ron Highfield. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic. *American Theological Inquiry* 6(2): 88-91.

Pieces in Magazines, etc.

- 2017 Brad Vermurlen. “Twenty-Five ‘Non-Christian’ Books Published This Year That Christians Should Read.” *Mere Orthodoxy*. Editor-in-Chief: Jake Meador.
- 2017 Brad Vermurlen. “Being Bold in the City: Reflections on *The Bold Type*.” *Christ and Pop Culture*. An online magazine on Christian cultural engagement. Editor-in-Chief: Dr. Alan Noble.

- 2017 Brad Vermurlen. "Jesus the Populist, Cosmopolitan Christ." *Christ and Pop Culture*. An online magazine on Christian cultural engagement.
- 2016 Brad Vermurlen. "Christ and Pop Anti-Culture?" *Christ and Pop Culture*. An online magazine about Christian cultural engagement.
- 2014 Brad Vermurlen. "When the Whole Is Greater Than the Sum of Its Parts." *The Church and Postmodern Culture*. Hosted by Baker Books and the Department of Philosophy at Calvin College.
- 2013 Brad Vermurlen. "Postmodernism vs. Critical Realism." *The Church and Postmodern Culture*. Hosted by Baker Books and the Department of Philosophy at Calvin College.

RESEARCH AND CONSULTING FOR CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATIONS

Docent Research Group
 Areas: Theology and Sociology
 February 2009-Present
 Advisor: Dr. Glenn Lucke

Selected Research Projects:

Central Christian Church, Las Vegas, NV. Pastor Jud Wilhite: I produced weekly research briefs, usually 10-15 pages, for incorporation into sermons that Jud delivers on Sundays. This work included theological exegesis, cultural illustrations, practical applications, and more. September 2009–Feb. 2012. With Justin Detmers, Pilgrim Benham, Ethan Welch, and Bobby Herrington.

Mars Hill Church, Seattle, WA. Pastor Brad House: I calculated original statistics and provided other sociological insights that were incorporated into Pastor House's (2011) book *Community: Taking Your Small Group off Life Support*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books. September–October 2009. See it on Amazon.com: <http://amzn.to/rdoR2J> and on Google Books: <http://bit.ly/r6s9jh>.

Mars Hill Church, Seattle, WA. Pastor Mark Driscoll: I contributed sociological commentary as well as statistics for a critical review of Frank Viola and George Barna's (2008) book *Pagan Christianity? Exploring the Roots of Our Church Practices*. November 2009. The result was a post on The Resurgence at: <http://theresurgence.com/2010/02/10/pagan-christianity-critique>.

Mars Hill Church, Seattle, WA. Pastor Mark Driscoll: I calculated statistics about the decline of orthodox Christian beliefs among young Evangelicals in the U.S., which The Resurgence used to promote Driscoll's (2010) *Doctrine: What Christians Should Believe*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway. December 2009. (<http://theresurgence.com/2010/02/15/doctrine-what-christians-should-believe>)

Cross Church, Springdale, AR. Pastor Ronnie Floyd: I articulated examples from modern history and sociology of how extant social structures and systems change when the Spirit of God moves. The full report, which also included examples from the Bible, was used in the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force of the Southern Baptist Convention. March 2010. With Tim McConnell.

Mars Hill Church, Seattle, WA. Pastor Mark Driscoll: I co-organized and worked as the project manager and editor for the historical and sociological dimensions of research that went into Mark and Grace Driscoll's (2012) *Real Marriage: The Truth About Sex, Friendship, and Life Together*. Thomas Nelson. September 2010–December 2010. With Mieke Thomeer and Aida Ramos.

Mars Hill Church, Seattle, WA. Pastor Mark Driscoll: I provided a research report on the history, etymology, and definitions (sociological, theological, and popular) of the word “cult.” This work was incorporated into a sermon and a post about Mormonism on Pastor Mark's personal website. See: <http://pastormark.tv/2011/10/18/is-mormonism-a-cult>.

Mars Hill Church, Seattle, WA. Pastor Justin Holcomb: I compiled research and statistics on the issue of domestic/intimate partner violence in the United States. This research was incorporated into Justin S. Holcomb and Lindsey A. Holcomb's (2014) book, *Is It My Fault? Hope and Healing for Those Suffering Domestic Violence*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers. October 2011.

Mars Hill Church, Seattle, WA. Pastor Justin Holcomb: I directed and edited a research report on the market of book publishing in the United States. In particular, the report provided statistics on how the market—and the Christian publishing market in particular—has responded to the rise of e-Books and e-Readers; also self-publishing and distribution. January 2012. With Erica Watson.

Mars Hill Church, Seattle, WA. Pastor Mark Driscoll: I wrote a detailed summary of Alexis de Tocqueville's book *Democracy in America* (1835)—the parts that deal with religion—along with a summary of Robert Bellah's famous article, “Civil Religion in America” (1967). January 2013.

The Village Church, Dallas/Fort Worth, TX. Pastor Matt Chandler and Pastor Josh Patterson: I wrote a literature review of scholarly research and theorizing about social movements, including what movements are, how they begin, movement strategies and leadership, etc. April-May 2013.

Mars Hill Church, Seattle, WA. Pastor Mark Driscoll: I provided eight research briefs for a forthcoming book addressing popular objections to Christianity. Topics covered include autonomy, individualism, intolerance, the definition of marriage, epistemic relativism, complementarianism, biblicism, money, supernaturalism, truth, and more. August-October 2013. With James Gordon.

The Summit Church, Durham, NC. Pastor J.D. Greear and Pastor David Thompson: I wrote a 40-question survey that the church leaders plan on using to collect and analyze data from their own congregants. Topics covered include demographic information, a religious profile, what attracted and kept them at the church, their involvement in and assessment of their church, etc. April 2014.

Hill Country Bible Church, Austin, TX. Pastor Tim Hawks: I outlined and managed a research brief on the current state of Christianity in the United States. Topics covered included descriptive statistics on church attendance, religious beliefs, the “rise of the nones,” generational differences, evangelism, congregations closing, and a portrait of Austin as a cultural influencer. May 2014.

Mars Hill Church, Seattle, WA. Pastor Mark Driscoll: I compiled, synthesized, and commented on sociological data—both qualitative and quantitative—for a research project on perceptions of

and objections to Christianity among the unchurched and dechurched. The result was an 80-page report along with a 9-page summary to be published as part of a Mars Hill campaign. July 2014.

The Village Church, Dallas/Fort Worth, TX. Pastor Matt Chandler: I compiled statistics about marriage and divorce in the United States and in Texas in particular. Differences across races, socioeconomic classes, and degrees of religiosity were highlighted. Matt Chandler discussed the statistics on NBC-Dallas as part of promoting his new book, *The Mingling of Souls*. Sept. 2014.

The Austin Stone Community Church, Austin, TX. Pastor Matt Carter: I designed and oversaw a small-scale telephone survey of Evangelical churches of various sizes and denominations about their Advent traditions. The research team interviewed church leaders, synthesized the interview data, and provided a written report to the Austin Stone. January-April 2015. With Brad Johnson.

Trinity Baptist Church, Jacksonville, FL. Pastor Tom Messer: I designed and administered an online survey about specialty worship services and various dimensions of congregational health. About 250 Evangelical churches in the United States completed the survey. The result was an 18-page quantitative report. March 2014-April 2015. With Kim Samuel and Katie Halbesleben.

Trinity Baptist Church, Jacksonville, FL. Pastor Tom Messer: I designed and oversaw a follow-up interview project about specialty worship services and congregational health. A total of nine Evangelical churches, sampled from those that had completed the online survey, participated in this portion. The result was a 10-page qualitative report. June-July 2015. With Rachel Hayes.

One Harbor Church, Morehead City, NC. Pastor Jesse Kincer: I provided critical feedback and revision recommendations for a survey used to evaluate congregational health. November 2015.

Highland Park Presbyterian Church, Dallas, TX. Pastor Bryan Dunagan and Pastor Jay Lee: I designed and implemented a research project on the ways large Presbyterian churches organize and deploy their deacon ministries. We conducted interviews at 10 churches and produced a report on best practices. June-July 2016. I supervised and trained Fred Holtzman on this work.

Highland Park Presbyterian Church, Dallas, TX. Pastor Bryan Dunagan and Pastor Jay Lee: I designed and implemented a research project on becoming a multi-site or “parish-model” church. I conducted 11 interviews with multi-site churches (plus found a twelfth interview online) and wrote a report of the findings and advice. I also wrote a draft of a prospectus plan. August 2016.

Kingsland Baptist Church, Katy, TX. Pastor Ryan Rush: I revised and expanded a “Frequently Asked Questions” document on transitioning from a single- to a multi-site church. August 2016.

The Austin Stone Community Church, Austin, TX. Pastor Matt Carter and Pastor Will Bostian: I compiled a list of twenty cities in the United States and Canada that are similar to Austin, Texas, in terms of population size and various cultural characteristics. December 2016-January 2017.

The Village Church, Dallas/Fort Worth, TX. Pastor Matt Chandler: For Matt Chandler’s annual sermon on Sanctity of Human Life Sunday, I compiled statistics about Millennials and abortion in the United States. I also drafted ten substantive views regarding abortion. January 2017.

The John Templeton Foundation, West Conshohocken, PA: I wrote a report for Templeton that summarized and synthesized recent research from Dr. Frank Fincham on prayer, forgiveness, relationships, and health. Templeton had awarded a grant to fund Fincham's research. May 2017.

White Horse Inn, Escondido, CA. Dr. Michael Horton and Mark Green: I researched and wrote monthly briefs about American religion, society, and culture, mostly statistics. This information was used for their podcast and their campaign for Core Christianity. August 2016-June 2017.

The Paradox Church, Fort Worth, TX. Pastor Jim Essian: I compiled various statistics and charts from published reports on singleness and marriage in the United States, including how these statistics have changed over recent decades and differences based on race, sex, and education. I also provided marriage statistics specific to Fort Worth and Tarrant County. October 2017.

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY. I served as an external auditor for a doctoral dissertation that used semi-structured personal interviews as a research method. I wrote an evaluation of the soundness of the work's design, procedures, and findings. October 2017.

The Village Church, Dallas/Fort Worth, TX. Pastor Matt Chandler: I designed, conducted, and analyzed an online survey of The Village's congregants regarding their views on plans to transition their campuses into autonomous churches, along with other issues. The survey was 20 questions and garnered 1,997 responses. November 2017-January 2018. With Stephanie Chen.

The Church on Rush Creek, Arlington, TX. Pastor Russ Barksdale: I designed and managed a qualitative project on church mergers. My team conducted phone interviews with pastors at ten megachurches that have recently acquired a new campus via a merger, and synthesized the interview data into a written report. Oct. 2017-Jan. 2018. With Kathy Larson and Steve Rustin.

AWARDS, GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS

- 2016 The William V. D'Antonio Award for Graduate Student Excellence in the Sociology of Religion, awarded by the Center for the Study of Religion and Society, \$1,100
- 2014 Visiting Graduate Student, Department of Sociology, University of Michigan–Ann Arbor [through Spring 2016]
- 2014 Graduate Student Research Award, awarded by the Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts, University of Notre Dame, \$2,500
- 2013 Zahm Research Travel Grant, awarded by the Graduate School at the University of Notre Dame, \$430
- 2013 Graduate Student Research Award, awarded by the Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts, University of Notre Dame, \$2,500
- 2012 Dissertation Research Grant, awarded by Docent Research Group, \$1,000

- 2008 University of Notre Dame, Presidential Fellowship, \$137,000
- 2008 University of Notre Dame, Full Tuition Scholarship [ongoing]
- 2008 Vanderbilt Provost's Fellowship for Under-Represented Minorities, \$50,000 [declined]

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Michigan
Soc 455: Sociology of Religion
Annual Guest Lecturer
November 2009–Present

University of Notre Dame
Soc 43101: Telling About Society (Knowledge and Media)
Teaching Assistant to Dr. Terence McDonnell
August 2011–December 2011

University of Michigan
Soc/Psych 122: Inter-Faith Relations
Co-Designer and Course Facilitator
September 2006–April 2008

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Book

Brad Vermurlen. *Reformed Resurgence: The New Calvinist Movement and the Battle Over American Evangelicalism*. (Manuscript 95% written.)

Article

Brad Vermurlen. "A Precise Theory of Culture and Cultural Things."

GRADUATE COURSEWORK

Cultural Sociology (Fall 2008 with Lynette Spillman)
Research and Analysis in Sociology of Religion (Fall 2008–Present)
Social Psychology (Fall 2008 with Jessica Collett)
Classical Social Theory (Fall 2008 with Omar Lizardo)
Social Networks (Spring 2009 with Omar Lizardo)
Research Methods (Spring 2009 with David Sikkink)
Statistics II (Spring 2009 with Richard Williams)
Christian Theism and Philosophy (Fall 2009 with Alvin Plantinga)
Culture and Consumption (Fall 2009 with Eugene Halton)

Designing Qualitative Research (Fall 2009 with Lynette Spillman)
Global Sociology (Spring 2010 with Jackie Smith)
Religion and Social Change (Spring 2010 with Kraig Beyerlein)
Sociology of Religion (Fall 2010 with Kevin Christiano)
Sociology of Organizations (Fall 2010 with Mary Ellen Konieczny)
Critical Realism and Personhood (Fall 2010–Spring 2011 with Christian Smith)
 Cumulative GPA: 3.96

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 2015 “Structural Overlap and the Management of Cultural Marginality: The Case of Calvinist Hip-Hop.” Junior Theorists Symposium, ASA Theory Section. Chicago, IL.
- 2014 “Hip-Hop and Black Identity in the (Mostly White) New Calvinist Movement.” Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, annual meeting. Indianapolis, IN.
- 2013 “The Structure of the Evangelical Field.” Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, annual meeting. Boston, MA.
- 2013 “Moral, Believing Global Actors: A Personalist, Culturalist Lens on Neoliberal Globalization.” American Sociological Association, annual meeting. New York, NY.
- 2012 “How Leaders Create Momentum: Rethinking Religious Strength in a Strategic Action Field.” Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, annual meeting. Phoenix, AZ.
- 2012 “Reconsidering the Habitus Concept through Critical Realist Personalism.” American Sociological Association, annual meeting. Denver, CO.
- 2011 “Religious Congregations in the United States as Constituting a Strategic Action Field.” Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, annual meeting. Milwaukee, WI.
- 2011 “Organizational Culture and Symbolic Boundary-Work in Church Planting.” American Sociological Association, annual meeting. Las Vegas, NV. Regular Session.
- 2011 “Religious and Secular Organizations in Progressive Political Activism.” Collective Behavior and Social Movements Conference. Las Vegas, NV. With Kraig Beyerlein.
- 2010 “Boot Camp: Leaders Framing Leadership in the Acts 29 Church Planting Network.” Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, annual meeting. Baltimore, MD.
- 2010 “Religious Identity Salience and Discussion-Network Structure among American Adults.” American Sociological Association, annual meeting. Atlanta, GA.
- 2009 “The Good Life: Christian Faith and Consumer Culture among Emerging Adults.” Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, annual meeting. Denver, CO.

- 2009 “Moralistic Therapeutic Deism in an Evangelical Youth Group.” Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, annual meeting. Denver, CO. With Hilary Davidson.
- 2009 “The Embodied Spirit and the Internal Roots of Weberian Marxism.” American Sociological Association, annual meeting. San Francisco, CA. Panel on Critical Theory.
- 2009 “Religious Youth Group as an Arena for Social Causal Mechanisms.” Chicago Ethnography Conference. Northwestern University, Chicago. With Hilary Davidson.

INVITED LECTURES

- 2018 “What is Culture, and How Does It Work?” Seminar delivered at Riverview Church. Lansing, MI.
- 2017 “What is Culture, and How Does It Work?” Taught a two-day seminar at Reformed Theological Seminary in partnership with Redeemer Presbyterian Church. New York, NY.
- 2017 “Work Toward Understanding Core Christianity’s Target Audience.” Presented at White Horse Inn. Escondido, CA. President’s Advisory Council.

CONFERENCES ATTENDED (NON-PRESENTER)

- 2015 New Conversations in Science and Religion: What Difference Might Critical Realist Philosophy Make? Hosted at the University of Notre Dame. July 30-31.
- 2015 International Association for Critical Realism, 18th Annual Conference. Hosted at the University of Notre Dame. July 28-30.
- 2013 Sola 13: The Five Solas of the Reformation. Hosted by University Reformed Church and Riverview Church. Lansing, Michigan. December 6-7.
- 2013 Critical Realism: Problems and Prospects. Hosted at New York University. New York City. August 14-15.
- 2013 Junior Theorists Symposium, seventh annual. Hosted at the New School for Social Research. New York City. August 9.
- 2011 Young Scholars in Social Movements, second annual. Hosted at the University of Notre Dame. April 29.
- 2010 Young Scholars in Social Movements, first annual. Hosted at the University of Notre Dame. April 9.
- 2010 Michigan Social Theory Conference. Hosted at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. March 12-13.

- 2009 Critical Realism and Human Personhood. Hosted at the University of Notre Dame. May 20-22.
- 2009 Young Scholars in the Sociology of Religion. Hosted at the University of Notre Dame. May 19-20.
- 2008 Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, annual meeting. Louisville, Kentucky. October 17-19.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE (SINCE FALL 2007)

Research Assistant: Cultural Entropy: How Meaning Falls Apart
University of Notre Dame, Department of Sociology
Principal Investigator: Dr. Terence McDonnell, September 2011–Present

Principal Investigator: The New Calvinism in a Strategic Action Field
Center for the Study of Religion and Society, University of Notre Dame
Dissertation Chair: Dr. David Sikkink, September 2011–Present

Research Assistant: Religion at the 2010 United States Social Forum
Center for the Study of Social Movements and Social Change, University of Notre Dame
Principal Investigator: Dr. Jackie Smith, with Dr. Kraig Beyerlein, June 2010–Present

Research Assistant: The Science of Generosity
Center for the Study of Religion and Society, University of Notre Dame
Principal Investigator: Dr. Christian Smith, with Patricia Snell, April 2010–September 2010

Research Assistant: Cardus Education Study
Center for the Study of Religion and Society, University of Notre Dame
Principal Investigator: Dr. David Sikkink, August 2009–May 2011

Research Assistant: Northern Indiana Congregations Study (NICS)
Center for the Study of Religion and Society, University of Notre Dame
Principal Investigator: Dr. Christian Smith, with Patricia Snell, September 2008–May 2009

Principal Investigator: Types of Religious Belief Formation among Emerging Adults
Honors Program in the Department of Sociology, University of Michigan
Advisors: Dr. Sarah Burgard and Dr. Terence McGinn, September 2007–May 2008

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

- 2008 – Present American Sociological Association
Section on Culture
Section on Theory
Section on Religion
Section on Altruism, Morality, and Social Solidarity

Section on Consumers and Consumption
2013 – Present Religious Research Association
2009 – Present Association for the Sociology of Religion
2008 – Present Society for the Scientific Study of Religion
2007 – Present Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Peer Reviewer:

- *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change*
- *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*
- *Gender & Society*

Organizer and Convener: Thematic Session on Religion and Movements: Collective Behavior and Social Movements Mini-Conference, Las Vegas, NV, August 18-19, 2011.

MEDIA APPEARANCES

- 2014 Quoted in an article in *The Huffington Post*, “Calvinism and Conflict,” by Martin Marty. January 28.
- 2014 Interviewed for and quoted in an article in *The New York Times*, “Evangelicals Find Themselves in the Midst of a Calvinist Revival,” by Mark Oppenheimer. January 3.

MISC. INFORMATION

Denomination: Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)
Citizenship: United States of America
Languages: Intermediate German

REFERENCES

Christian Smith, Ph.D.
Department of Sociology
University of Notre Dame
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Omar Lizardo, Ph.D.
Department of Sociology
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Glenn Lucke, Ph.D.
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