

## BRAD R. BRAXTON

Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University  
Dallas, Texas 75275  
bbraxton@smu.edu

---

### Summary of Qualifications

- **Leadership Skills for Diverse Groups** – Consensus-builder with strong interpersonal, teamwork, and listening skills. Experienced mediator and counselor able to facilitate dialogue. Considerable experience as a cultural ambassador in global and interfaith contexts. Teach and write extensively on racial/ethnic reconciliation, progressive religious thought, social justice, and cultural diversity.
- **Teaching and Public Speaking Expertise** – Hold an endowed, tenured, full professorship at Southern Methodist University. Mentor for graduate students, especially from underrepresented cultural groups. Widely-published author with 3 books and more than 30 essays, sermons, and web publications. 20 years of numerous speaking engagements at universities, conferences, and ecumenical religious settings. International speaking appearances in England (at Westminster Abbey), Ghana, South Africa, and Canada.
- **Management Capabilities** – Led major university administrative projects dealing with strategic planning, evaluation, and hiring. Established a religious, non-profit corporation. Served as Senior Pastor of 2 historic, urban, interdenominational churches. Developed and evaluated staff. Implemented new management structures that significantly enhanced church administration. Directed successful fund-raising campaigns. Excellent motivator able to enhance morale of professional colleagues. Train leaders in vision-casting and strategic thinking.

### Education

**Ph.D.**, 1999

Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia

Primary Area: New Testament Studies, Secondary Area: Homiletics

*George W. Woodruff Fellow*

**M.Phil. (Master of Philosophy)**, 1993

University of Oxford, Oxford, England

Primary Area: New Testament Studies

*Rhodes Scholar*

**B.A.**, 1991

University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia

Major: Religious Studies, Minor: Classics

*Phi Beta Kappa, Magna Cum Laude Graduate, Jefferson Scholar*

### Professional Experience

**Lois Craddock Perkins Professor of Homiletics, with tenure**, Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas: I am the first African American to come to SMU with an endowed faculty chair. Researching and writing essays on cultural diversity and social justice in faith communities. Participate on Gender, Ethnic, and Racial Concerns Committee. Serve as mentor for emerging religious and academic leaders, especially from underrepresented cultural groups. Teach graduate courses in religious practices for social justice and peace in a global world. 2012-present.

**Founding Senior Minister**, The Open Church, Baltimore, Maryland: Established a religious, non-profit cooperation/congregation committed to cultural diversity, social justice activism, and interfaith collaboration. The congregation's mission is informed by the ecumenism of leaders such as Benjamin Mays, Howard Thurman, Mother Teresa, and Mahatma Gandhi. Wrote an extensive strategic vision for the congregation. Organized the leadership teams. In its first nine months, the congregation achieved an average worship attendance of 100+ persons and raised nearly \$140,000. 2012-present.

**Distinguished Visiting Scholar**, McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois: Organized conference on Christian ministry as public leadership and delivered keynote conference lectures. Presented numerous speeches across the United States on issues of religion and social justice. Researched and wrote essays on social justice and cultural diversity in faith communities. Taught graduate courses in religious practices for social justice and peace in a global world. 2010-2012.

**Faculty Member**, Fund for Theological Education Doctoral Student Conference, Chicago, Illinois: Served as faculty mentor for national summer enrichment conference for African American doctoral students in religious studies. Led panel discussion concerning religion's role in social transformation. Conducted mock job interviews with doctoral candidates to enhance their professional skills. June 2010.

**Senior Minister**, The Riverside Church, New York, New York: Provided pastoral and administrative leadership for large, urban, interdenominational congregation. Managed 100+ employees. Oversight of \$12 million budget. Church ministries included local, national, and international initiatives dealing with social justice issues such as strengthening early childhood education, reforming the prison system, alleviating poverty, and supporting global peace movements. Hosted and preached at interfaith conference uniting Muslims, Jews, and Christians. 2008-2009.

**Associate Professor of Homiletics and New Testament, with tenure**, Divinity School, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee: Supervised Ph.D. dissertation on religion's role in racial reconciliation. Participated on a Dean-appointed faculty task force examining cultural diversity and social justice in higher education. Directed Self-Study for Homiletics and Liturgics Department analyzing departmental strengths and strategic growth opportunities. Chaired faculty search committee and served on Personnel and Policy Committee. Taught graduate courses in religious practices for social justice and peace in a global world. 2004-2008.

**Theologian-in-Residence**, Missions Study Trip to Ghana and South Africa: Served as theological expert and cultural ambassador during trip sponsored by the Ford Foundation. Prepared comprehensive report examining theological and cultural principles for local and global social justice work in contemporary black churches. Visited churches, schools, community centers, and cultural sites in Accra and Cape Coast, Ghana and Cape Town and Johannesburg, South Africa. Established dialogue with African leaders about current and future economic, educational, and healthcare ventures. April 2007.

**Jessie Ball duPont Assistant Professor of Homiletics and Biblical Studies,** Divinity School, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina: Supervised Master's theses on religion's role in the empowerment of historically oppressed cultural groups. Chaired Divinity School's Self-Study for Accreditation with the Association of Theological Schools. Led the compilation of a 120-page report on institutional strengths, challenges, and growth opportunities. Taught graduate courses in religious practices for social justice and peace in a global world. 2000-2004.

**Senior Minister,** Douglas Memorial Community Church, Baltimore, Maryland: Provided pastoral and administrative leadership for mid-size, urban, interdenominational congregation. Church ministries included 50-acre residential camp for youth, moderate-income apartment complex, federal credit union, and interfaith dialogues with Baltimore's Jewish community. Developed and evaluated staff. Oversight of \$750,000 annual budget. 1995-2000.

**Ordained Minister,** First Baptist Church, Salem, Virginia: 1991.

## Publications

### Books

*Preaching Paul.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004.

*No Longer Slaves: Galatians and African American Experience.* Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2002.

*The Tyranny of Resolution: I Corinthians 7:17-24.* Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000.

### Selected Articles

"Every Time I Feel the Spirit: African American Christology for a Pluralistic World" in *Radical Christian Voices and Practice: Essays in Honor of Christopher Rowland*, ed. Zoe Bennett and David Gowler, 181-199. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

"Leave No Change Behind (Preaching for Social Transformation)" in *Sojourners*. <http://sojo.net/magazine/2012/08/leave-no-change-behind>, August 2012.

"Same-Sex Marriage Support: A Sign of Love, Acceptance and Devotion to God" Opinion Editorial in *The Washington Post*. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/same-sex-marriage-support-a-sign-of-love-acceptance-and-devotion-to-god/2012/05/16/gIQAlkFkTU\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/same-sex-marriage-support-a-sign-of-love-acceptance-and-devotion-to-god/2012/05/16/gIQAlkFkTU_story.html), May 2012.

"Preaching, Politics, and Paul in Contemporary African American Christianity" in *The Oxford Handbook of the Reception History of the Bible*, ed. Michael Lieb, Emma Mason, Jonathan Roberts, and Christopher Rowland, 557-575. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

"Lifting the Veil: The Shoah and the Maafa in Conversation" *Perspectives in Religious Studies*, vol. 38, number 2 (2011): 185-193.

“Worship and Prayer in African American Christianity” in *The Huffington Post*. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/brad-r-braxton/worship-prayer-african-american-christianity\\_b\\_1028457.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/brad-r-braxton/worship-prayer-african-american-christianity_b_1028457.html), October 2011.

“The Holy Spirit, Jesus, and Social Justice in Black Churches: Making Noise or Making a Difference?” in *The Huffington Post*. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/brad-r-braxton/the-spirit-jesus-and-soci\\_b\\_829665.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/brad-r-braxton/the-spirit-jesus-and-soci_b_829665.html), March 2011.

“Sanctification and Proclamation: Walking with God” in *A Spiritual Life: Perspectives from Poets, Prophets, and Preachers*, ed. Allan Hugh Cole, Jr., 231-241. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011.

“Getting in Front of Jesus: The Politics of Progressive Christianity” in *The Huffington Post*. Part I: [www.huffingtonpost.com/brad-r-braxton/getting-in-front-of-jesus\\_b\\_649152.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/brad-r-braxton/getting-in-front-of-jesus_b_649152.html), July 2010. Part II: [www.huffingtonpost.com/brad-r-braxton/getting-in-front-of-jesus\\_b\\_680553.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/brad-r-braxton/getting-in-front-of-jesus_b_680553.html), August 2010.

“What Happened to Sacred Eloquence? (Celebrating the Ministry of Gardner C. Taylor)” [co-authored with Martha Simmons] in *Our Sufficiency Is of God: Essays on Preaching in Honor of Gardner C. Taylor*, ed. Timothy George, James Earl Massey, and Robert Smith, Jr., 272-300. Macon: Mercer University Press, 2010.

“Paul and Racial Reconciliation: A Postcolonial Approach to 2 Corinthians 3:12-18” in *Scripture and Traditions: Essays on Early Judaism and Christianity in Honor of Carl R. Holladay*, ed. Gail O’Day and Patrick Gray, 411-428. Leiden: Boston, 2008.

### Selected Sermons

“The Tree of Life” in *A Beautiful Thing: Sermons from the Inaugural Festival of Young Preachers*, ed. Lee Huckleberry, 260-265. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2010.

“Hope in 3-D” in *The Audacity of Faith: Christian Leaders Reflect on the Election of Barack Obama*, ed. Marvin A. McMickle, 136-141. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 2009.

“Two Places at the Same Time” in *Awakened to a Calling: Reflections on the Vocation of Ministry*, ed. Anne M. Svennungsen and Melissa Wiginton, 57-64. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005.

### Academic Projects

Contributing Editor, *Preaching with Sacred Fire: An Anthology of African American Sermons, 1750 to the Present*, ed. Martha Simmons and Frank A. Thomas. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2010. The anthology chronicles across two and a half centuries the contributions of African American preaching to national and international movements for social justice and cultural harmony. 2003-2010.

Team Member, Strategic Planning Group, *Roundtable on the Sexual Politics of Black Churches*. Member of a nine-person team that coordinated three national

gatherings of African American faith leaders and scholars who are committed to progressive conversations about sexuality in black churches. Implementing a national strategy for greater inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons in black churches. The project is funded by the Arcus Foundation. 2010-present.

Team Member, *The African American Lectionary*. This team of scholars and faith leaders created the first, online, ecumenical preaching and worship lectionary for African American churches. The project received nearly \$2 million from the Lilly Endowment. The website contains more than 4,000 pages of theological scholarship and has received more than 4 million visitors. I designed the biblical interpretation guidelines to promote greater cultural sensitivity and empower creative social justice work among faith communities; assisted in selecting the liturgical moments and biblical texts for the lectionary calendar; wrote biblical commentaries; and edited commentaries from other contributors ([www.theafricanamericanlectionary.org](http://www.theafricanamericanlectionary.org)). 2005-2010.

### Works in Progress

“Aiding and Abetting New Life: ‘Sex-Talk’ in the Pulpit, Pew, and Public Square” in *The Sexual Politics of Black Churches*, ed. Josef Sorett. New York: Columbia University Press, Forthcoming 2014 (manuscript submitted to the editor). The essay examines ways to create welcoming environments for constructive discussions of sexual diversity in faith communities.

*School Is in Session: Lessons from the Left to Make the World Right*. I am preparing the proposal for a book-length collection of my essays and sermons examining faith, cultural diversity, and social justice from a progressive perspective.

### Selected Lectures

“Blueprint for the Beloved Community: Vocation, Values, and Voice” Union Theological Seminary, New York, New York. December 2012.

“The Beloved Community in a Pluralistic World,” The Holley-Hull Lectures, Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama. September 2011.

“Violence and Reconciliation: Three Dimensions of Restoration,” Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston, Illinois. February 2011.

“Street Corner Religion: Public Theology for a Pluralistic World,” Bernard Manekin Lecture, Institute for Christian and Jewish Studies, Baltimore, Maryland. November 2010.

“Imagination for Proclamation: Widening the Boundaries,” 95<sup>th</sup> Annual Hampton University Ministers’ Conference, Hampton, Virginia. June 2009.

“Images of African American Preachers: Refocusing for a Righteous Revolution,” Gardner C. Taylor Distinguished Lecturer and Preacher, Duke Divinity School, Durham, North Carolina. October 2007.

“Lifting the Veil: Religion, Reparations, and Reconciliation,” 2006-2007 Bray Lectures. Lectured in Accra and Cape Coast, Ghana. December 2006. Lectured in 6 British cities. March 2007.

---

<b>Selected Preaching Engagements</b>	<p>Renaissance Sunday, Distinguished Preachers Series, Morehouse College, Atlanta, Georgia. March 2012.</p> <p>Festival of Theology, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky. May 2011.</p> <p>Festival of Homiletics National Ministry Conference, Nashville Tennessee. May 2010.</p> <p>Chapel Service, Yale Divinity School, New Haven, Connecticut. November 2009.</p> <p>Inauguration Worship Service of the 10<sup>th</sup> President of Morehouse College—Dr. Robert M. Franklin, Morehouse College, Atlanta, Georgia. February 2008.</p> <p>Racial Reconciliation Conference, Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches and the African United Baptist Association, Acadia University, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, Canada. The conference celebrated racial healing and new partnerships between black and white religious communities in Canada. August 2007.</p> <p>Sunday Worship Service, Temba Baptist Church, Temba, South Africa. April 2007.</p> <p>Sunday Worship Service, Westminster Abbey, London, England. The service was part of the bicentennial commemoration of the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. March 2007.</p>
<b>Selected Courses Taught</b>	<p>Preaching, Healing, and Justice</p> <p>Preaching in the African American Tradition</p> <p>Interdisciplinary Study of Preaching and Worship</p> <p>The New Testament and Contemporary Cultures</p> <p>The Apostle Paul and Politics</p>
<b>Selected Affiliations</b>	<p>Advisory Board, Faith Partnerships, Incorporated, Raleigh, North Carolina</p> <p>Advisory Board, <i>The African American Pulpit</i> Journal (2004-2010)</p> <p>Member, Academy of Homiletics</p> <p>Member, Society of Biblical Literature</p>
<b>Personal</b>	<p>Spouse: Lazetta R. Braxton</p> <p>Child: Karis J. Braxton</p> <p>Hobbies: Weightlifting, Listening to Jazz, Movie Enthusiast</p>