

PEW RESEARCH PROPOSAL

1. Title of the project.

Being Transformed: A Study of Faith and Learning at Christian Liberal Arts Colleges

2. Statement of the end product(s)

A 70,000 to 80,000 word book manuscript submitted to presses such as Oxford University Press, Rowman and Littlefield, Baker Academic, or Baylor University Press. The main ideas from this manuscript will also be disseminated as 1,000-word short articles for online journals such the *Christian Scholars Review Blog*, *Church Life Journal*, and *Public Discourse*. I also plan to present the results at the Baylor Institute for Faith and Learning's annual conference and the Pew Research luncheon.

3. Explanation of the scholarly activity.

I. Statement of the scholarly activity.

This mixed-methods research project will explore how Christian liberal arts colleges shape their students' views of the purpose of education. More specifically, this project explores the following research questions:

- How do students understand the relationship between their faith and coursework? Do they experience coursework as enriching their faith and spirituality?
- What are students' perceptions of general education? Does the core curriculum lead to a greater appreciation of learning for its own sake?
- Does the culture of busyness limit the extent to which students are transformed by their coursework?
- How do Christian liberal arts colleges shape their students' perspectives of career and vocation?

II. Description of the activity and its goals.

This project will analyze data from a restricted dataset (The College Senior Survey), as well as conduct interviews of students at Christian liberal arts colleges to address the research questions above (more details on methods to follow).

The first goal of this project is to explore how *students* understand the integration of faith and learning. The scholarly study of the integration of faith and learning is generally centered on the

ways faculty integrate faith and learning—and rightly so. Many articles, books, and blog posts argue how the integration of faith and learning is central to the mission of Christian liberal arts colleges and how faculty can effectively integrate the Christian faith within their disciplines (Glanzer and Alleman 2019). Yet Christian colleges are increasingly concerned with being able to recruit enough students who fit their mission. How do the students who choose to enroll understand the purposes of Christian higher education? Are Christian colleges merely safe environments to take a few Bible classes and be credentialed for one's chosen career, or do students expect and appreciate courses that integrate faith in ways that substantially shapes the purposes and paradigms of the course itself? This research question will be addressed through qualitative interviews of college students at Christian liberal arts colleges.

The second goal of this project is to explore whether Christian liberal arts colleges transform students to envision the inherent (Christian) meaning of all academic subjects and appreciate learning for its own sake. These aspects of transformation are central to Christian liberal arts colleges who aspire to connect faith and learning, faith and career, and service to church and society. One of the primary ways that Christian liberal arts colleges have achieved this goal is through their core curriculum. Yet evidence—both scholarly and anecdotal—suggest that students view the core curriculum as something to "get out of the way" as they fulfill the requirements to earn their degree. This project explores students' perceptions of the core curriculum, as well as its effects on students. Even if students view the core curriculum merely as a box to check, are there other aspects of the core curriculum that they do appreciate? In addition to interviews, this project will analyze from data from the Higher Education Research Institute's College Senior Survey (CSS) to explore the connection between students' experiences of their general education and their views of the purpose of education.

Another feature of contemporary higher education—including Christian liberal arts colleges—is a culture of busyness. Scholarly and anecdotal evidence suggest everyone is perpetually. Mental health issues abound and students frequently report being overwhelmed. How does this culture of busyness influence the extent to which students are transformed by their Christian liberal arts education? (Goal #2) The CSS also includes questions related to students' mental health. The CSS is uniquely well-suited to explore the relationship between students' time use and vision of their education since it asks respondents to report how much time they devote to attending class, working on courses outside of class, extracurriculars, paid work, media consumption, and time with friends. In addition, this study will interview students to gain a clearer perspective of how busyness relates to their overall academic experience.

The third and final goal of this project is to explore how students understand career success and their future vocation. The CSS asks students to rate the importance of income, work/life balance, expression of values, and creativity (among other features) in their future career. The CSS also asks seniors to what extent their life's goals involve raising a family, being well-off financially, recognition in their field, developing a meaningful life philosophy, and integrating spirituality into their life. These questions allow for a deeper exploration of how the core curriculum and busyness might shape students' career and vocational aspirations. The qualitative interviews will also provide a more nuanced portrait of how students envision their future careers and vocations.

How the Pew Research Grant Enables This Project

This project will extend previous research by drawing on data from the College Senior Survey, which includes seniors from 26 Christian Liberal Arts colleges that prioritize the integration of faith and learning (including Union University). The CSS is one of the best tools for exploring these research questions because it is a highly respected and longitudinal data set. Not only does it include a relatively large sample of Christian colleges, but the survey has been conducted at over 600 campuses over the years, meaning it allows for a comparison of students at Christian and non-Christian institutions. A review of studies on Christian higher education reveals that few scholars have used the CSS, in part because the Higher Education Research Institute charges 2,750 dollars to access the data (plus 50 dollars for each additional cohort). The Pew Research Grant would allow access to this dataset and enable an unprecedented study of Christian colleges and their outcomes.

The Institutional Review Board has already approved the qualitative portion of this study, which aims to interview 20 Union students. Participants will also complete a short survey before their interview (some of the questions can be answered more easily in a survey format). Currently these students are being offered a ten-dollar gift card to participate in the study. The Pew Research grant would allow for the qualitative portion of this study to be conducted on another 5 - 7 other Christian liberal arts college campuses for overall sample size of 60 students. A gift card of 20 dollars is more fitting given that students are being asked to spend 1-2 hours completing the survey and being interviewed.¹ The Pew Research Grant will incentivize students from other Christian liberal arts colleges to be interviewed, while also enabling Union students to receive the same incentive.

III. Theoretical framework.

The theoretical framework for this study is grounded in Institutional Theory—specifically institutional logics—as well as Astin's Theory of Student Involvement. Theories of institutional logics analyze the organizing principle of an institution and how it shapes human behavior within that institution (Thornton and Ocasio 2008). Christian higher education sits at the intersection of three institutional spheres: the academy, the professions, and the church. Christian colleges—as faith-based institutions—affirm the inherent goodness of the created world and a broad understanding of vocation, yet they are also beholden to various stakeholders—including accreditors, graduate programs, and employers—whose sole interest is the professional competence of their graduates. Students are caught in the middle of these competing concerns. The theory of institutional logics offers a helpful framework for thinking through the tensions facing both Christian colleges and students as they pursue Christ-centered education.

This study is also rooted in Astin's Theory of Student Involvement, which argues that "a particular curriculum, to achieve the effects intended, must elicit sufficient student effort and investment of energy to bring about the desired learning and development" (Astin 1999). From this perspective, Christian colleges must not only integrate faith and learning and remain faithful to Scripture. Rather, if they are to fulfill their mission of forming students for service to church

¹ Some of these off-campus interviews will be conducted in person when feasible. Others will be conducted via Teams. IRB approval to extend the study to other campuses will be sought after funding is obtained.

and society they must also foster students' honest engagement with their coursework. If students are overly busy or apathetic toward the integration of faith and learning then they will not develop in ways that align with the mission of Christian colleges. This study explores the features of Christian colleges that contribute to or detract from this kind of Christ-centered student engagement.

IV. Brief examination of scholarly literature.

The contemporary landscape of higher education is plagued with uncertainty. Prominent voices are challenging the value of attending college, while enrollment is declining overall. Even though Christian colleges have fared better than other types of institutions (Glanzer 2024), many Christian college faculty and administrators are still fearful of cuts or closure due to their institution's dependence on revenue from tuition. In recent years some Christian colleges have cut programs which were once viewed as essential to their liberal arts mission. These challenging trends raise questions related to the mission, distinctiveness, and effectiveness of Christian colleges. In what specific ways are Christian colleges transformative? Do students and parents truly value the kind of education that Christian liberal arts colleges are offering?

Christian colleges and their students are different from other institutions because they emphasize discipleship, spiritual growth, and the integration of faith and learning (Davignon and Thomson 2015). Even though 70% of students report that the college's Christian identity was a "very important" factor in their decision to attend (Davignon 2016), some seem primarily concerned with finding a safe environment where they can have fun while gaining a credential that prepares them for their future career (Bilbro 2024; Smith 2011). Christian colleges must engage their students spiritually and academically if they are to fulfill their mission (Astin 1999). Yet this is no easy task, as many students experience college as boring (Blum 2016). Among students at Christian colleges, only 29% were "very satisfied" with the relevance of the coursework (Davignon 2016).

Similarly, Christian colleges must think about spiritual formation beyond campus ministry. Students generally come from families where faith is a top priority, but many college students put their faith "on the shelf" during their college years, with the intent to pick it up again after graduation (Clydesdale 2007). College students frequently describe themselves as busy (Bland 2012). Are they too busy for the kinds of academic and formation that characterizes Christian colleges? Or as Parker Palmer puts it in his book *A Hidden Wholeness*, "Am I too busy to live my own life?" (72). In order to fulfill their mission of forming students for service to church and society Christian colleges must offer a spiritually transformative classroom experience and not rely solely on campus ministry.

Extending Existing Scholarship

The integration of faith and learning is a frequent topic of discussion on Christian colleges campus. Scholarship on the integration of faith and learning generally focuses on the ways faculty integrate faith and learning (Glanzer and Alleman 2019), rather than its overall effect on students. Studies on the integration of faith and learning often rely on data from a single course or campus. This project will utilize a restricted dataset (the College Senior Survey), as well as

qualitative interviews, to produce a groundbreaking study of the relationship between students' faith, coursework (including faith integration), and vision of their vocation.

References

- Astin, Alexander. "Student Involvement: A Developmental Theory for Higher Education." *Journal of College Student Development*. 40, no. 5 (1999): 518-529.
- Bilbro, Jeffrey. "Finding a (Real) Christian College," *Christianity Today*, May 1, 2024. <https://www.christianitytoday.com/2024/05/finding-real-christian-college-formatioal-education/>
- Bland, Helen, Melton, Bridget F., Welle, Paul, and Lauren Bigham. "Stress Tolerance: New Challenges for Millennial College Students." *College Student Journal*, 46, no. 2, (2012): 362-375.
- Blum, Susan. *"I Love Learning; I Hate School."* *An Anthropology of College*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016.
- Clydesdale, Tim. *The First Year Out: Understanding American Teens after High School*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Davignon, Phil. "Factors Influencing College Choice and Satisfaction for Christian College Students." *Religion and Education* 43, no. 1 (2016): 77-94.
- Davignon, Phil and Robert A. Thomson Jr. "Christian Colleges and Universities as Moral Communities: The Effects of Institutional Characteristics on Student Religiosity." *Review of Religious Research* 57, no 4. (2015): 531-54.
- Glanzer, Perry. "The Sky Is Not Falling, Revisited." *Christian Scholars Review Blog*, July 17, 2024. <https://christianscholars.com/the-sky-is-not-falling-revisited-religious-private-institutional-enrollment-is-stronger-than-state-and-secular-private/>
- Glanzer, Perry, and Nathan Alleman. *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Teaching*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019.
- Palmer, Parker. *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Self*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009.
- Smith, Christian. *Lost in Transition: The Dark Side of Emerging Adulthood*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Thorton, Patricia H., and William Ocasio. "Institutional Logics." In *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism*, edited by Royston Greenwood, Christine Oliver, Roy Suddaby, and Kerstin Sahlin, 99–129. London: SAGE, 2008.

V. Connection to Ernest Boyer's Model of Scholarship.

This project relates to Ernest Boyer's categories of the scholarship of discovery, integration, and application.

Scholarship of discovery: The project will conduct a comprehensive analysis of the effects of the integration of faith and learning on students through a mixed-methods study. The data for this project will involve more campuses (26) and students than previous studies. It will also explore how students' experience of general education relate to the overall mission and goals of Christian liberal arts colleges. Interviews of 60 students across 5-7 campuses will also provide depth and

nuance to quantitative analyses of how coursework shapes students' perspectives of the purpose of college and priorities in their future career.

Scholarship of integration: This project integrates research and perspectives from the discipline of Sociology, along with the academic study of higher education. In addition, this study is rooted in philosophical and theological frameworks which suggest that Christian formation does not automatically result from believing the right theology, but is determined by what we desire and imagine as good.²

Scholarship of Application: The findings of this project will be of interest to parents, prospective students, and Christian college faculty and administrators as they seek to faithfully fulfill their mission.

4. Essay on the Christian faith and the Discipline of Sociology

Sociology sits at the intersection of the humanities and the social sciences. We study human experience (humanities), but the discipline generally relies on statistics to understand people (social science). One possible risk of this approach is that sociologists might fall into one-dimensional perspective of people and human behavior. As one scholar quipped, sociology has a “missing persons problem,” meaning that even though we study social institutions and culture we run the risk of reducing people to a line on a spreadsheet. Another downside of relying too heavily on statistics is that many sociologists are blind to the underlying philosophical assumptions of our discipline. Many assume that sociology is a value-free social science, yet they fail to realize it is impossible to study people without some underlying vision of the human person. All disciplines are rooted in some implicit answer to the philosophical questions “What is a person?” (philosophical anthropology) and “What does it mean to flourish as a human being?” (ethics) These foundational questions shape our hypotheses and methods, yet many sociologists think these questions can be safely ignored.

Teaching at Union University and participating in a seminar and working group on the philosophy of social science at Yale University (2016-17) helped me bring these questions to the forefront of my scholarship. Social inquiry is not limited—but enriched—by acknowledging these philosophical questions and their Biblical answers. In recent years I have further integrated a Biblical anthropology (understanding of the human person) into my teaching and research. Not only are we made in the image of God, but Christ came that “[we] may have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). Human flourishing is not achieved by freeing ourselves from God’s law and imposing our will, but by living in accord with the Great Commandment to love God fully and to love our neighbor as our self (Matthew 22: 37-40). Sociology specializes in exploring the influence of culture and social institutions, but it must do so *through* the key to all knowledge, the eternal Logos, Jesus Christ, in whom “all things hold together.” (Colossians 1:17). Without him all things, including society and its social structures, fail to “hold together”—or disintegrate. This Biblical understanding is the foundation of my teaching and scholarship, which seeks to understand whether features modern culture and social institutions facilitate or

² See James K. A. Smith’s *Desiring the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009).

inhibit our ability to live faithfully by obeying the Great Commandment and striving (despite the persistence of sin in the world) to foster a world where “God may be all in all.” (1 Cor. 15:28).

This Research Project

Christian colleges are essential for making God “all in all” because they sit at the intersection of the church and the professions. Christian liberal arts colleges are places of serious academic inquiry—not from a (seemingly) neutral standpoint—but from one that is Christ-centered. We strive to be in the world but not of it. Yet there will always be *some* tension between the church and “the world” as we discern to what extent we are transforming the world, rather than being transformed by it. This research project aims to assess the extent to which Christian colleges transform their students, and thereby prepare them for lives of service in church and society. The institutions involved in the study have maintained their commitment to Christ-centered education despite the fact that many other colleges have become less distinctively Christian in recent decades.³ Yet they themselves are embattled by outside pressures: students who arrive less prepared; students who are less aware of this mission; the threat of declining enrollments; stakeholders who are more concerned with credentialing than transformation (both are important).

The discipline of Sociology offers theories and research methods that enable a deeper assessment of the ways Christian liberal arts colleges transform their students. My motivations are to reveal the ways Christian colleges are truly distinctive and transformative, while honestly assessing where we can do better. I hope this research project will produce a book that helps to inform the work of Christian college faculty and administrators as they seek to better fulfill their mission.

5. A time frame for the completion and a plan for the dissemination of the project.

Time frame	Activity
November 2024	Submit proposal to gain access to College Senior Survey (CSS)
Fall 2024	Conduct interviews at Union University
Spring 2025	Gain permission to conduct interviews on additional campuses
Spring 2025	Analyze CSS data; draft qualitative results chapters
Summer 2025	Outline and draft theoretical chapters
Fall 2025	Submit book proposals
Fall 2025	Conduct additional interviews; present at Baylor's IFL conference
Spring 2026	Draft qualitative results chapters; present results at Pew luncheon
Summer 2026	Final revisions and submit to publisher
Fall 2026	Draft short articles and blog posts for book launch
Spring 2027	Anticipated book launch

³ The classic study on this topic is James Burtchaell's *The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from their Christian Churches*.

6. A brief budget

Category	Amount	Narrative
Access to College Senior Survey	\$2,950	The Higher Education Research Institute charges researchers \$2,750 to access the data, as well as \$50 for each additional cohort. This amount would fund the purchase 5 cohorts worth of data, allowing for longitudinal analysis and/or the possibility of combining cohorts (i.e. 2016-18) to create a sufficient sample size of Christian colleges.
Incentive for non-UU students	\$800	Provides a \$20 incentive for 40 non-Union students to complete the survey and interview.
Increasing incentive for UU students	\$200	Provides an additional \$10 incentive (on top of \$10 from Sociology Dept.) to match the incentive received by non-Union students.
Travel	\$400	Reimbursing gas and hotel as I travel to conduct interviews at other regional Christian colleges. This amount will likely not cover the overall cost, so I will seek additional sources of funding.
Research materials	\$150	To purchase books and journals specific to higher education and the integration of faith and learning which are not available in our library.
Total	\$4,500	

7. Synopsis of Previous Pew Grant

I was awarded a Pew Grant in 2018 for a project titled “The Culture of Death in Everyday Life: Exploring the Roots of Secularization.” This project offered a new perspective on the nature of secularization. Secularization is often understood as the decline as religious belief and practice, but Charles Taylor helps us to see that secularization also involves the adoption of a “secular social imaginary,” where people—including Christians—envision the world through an “immanent frame” that obscures their vision of deeper spiritual reality. My project argued that “religion” is best understood as dispositions of heart and mind that are directed toward God, rather than mere assent to God’s existence and Sunday morning church attendance. This project also identified the ways features of modern education, work, consumption, and leisure form people in dispositions that prevent their hearts and minds from drawing closer to God.

This project was published by Cascade Press, taking the form of a book titled *Practicing Christians, Practical Atheists: How Cultural Liturgies and Everyday Social Practices Shape the Christian Life*. Since its publication earlier this year I have participated in several national radio interviews and accepted an invitation to speak at a local congregation. Reviewers said it “will doubtless appear in my teaching, preaching, and writing for years to come,” and that this book is a “must read for pastors and church leaders.”

PHIL DAVIGNON

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EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Sociology	Baylor University: 2014
M.A. in Sociology	Baylor University: 2011
B.A. in Sociology and Religion	Hillsdale College: 2008

APPOINTMENTS AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Associate Professor of Sociology, Union University	2020 - Present
Faculty-In-Residence, Union University	2020-2023
Department Chair, Sociology and Family Studies, Union University	2017 - Present
Assistant Professor of Sociology, Union University	2014 - 2020
Senior Research Analyst, Federation of State Medical Boards	2013-2014

BOOK

Davignon, Phil. *Practicing Christians, Practical Atheists: How Cultural Liturgies and Everyday Social Practices Shape the Christian Life*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2023.

BOOK CHAPTERS

Davignon, Phil. "Faithful Scholarship." In *Faithful Faculty: Hearing and Obeying a Calling to Christian Education*, Edited by Donny Mathis and Jacob Shatzer. Nashville: B&H Academic, forthcoming.

PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

Dougherty, Kevin, Perry Glanzer, Theodore Cockle, and **Phil Davignon**. "The Ethnic Church Attendance Gap at Christian Colleges." *International Journal of Christianity and Education*. (2022) <https://doi.org/10.1177/20569971221098725>

Thomson, Robert A. and **Phil Davignon**. "Religious Belief in Christian Higher Education: Is Religious and Political Diversity Relativizing?" *Social Compass* 64, no. 3 (2017) 404-423.

- Hunt, Emily and **Phil Davignon**. "The Invisible Thread: The Influence of Liberal Faculty on Student Political Views at Evangelical Colleges." *Journal of College and Character* 17, no. 3 (2016) 175-189.
- Davignon, Phil**. "The Influence of Religious Preferences on Choice of Church Congregation and Church Attendance." *Social Compass* 63, no. 2 (2016) 268-283.
- Davignon, Phil**. "Factors Influencing College Choice and Satisfaction for Christian College Students." *Religion and Education* 43, no. 1 (2016) 77-94.
- Davignon, Phil** and Robert A. Thomson Jr. "Christian Colleges and Universities as Moral Communities: The Effects of Institutional Characteristics on Student Religiosity." *Review of Religious Research* 57, no 4. (2015) 531-54.
- Davignon, Phil**, Aaron Young, and Dave Johnson. "Medical Board Complaints against Physicians Due to Communication: Analysis of North Carolina Medical Board Data, 2002-2012." *Journal of Medical Regulation* 100, no. 2 (2014) 28-31.
- Cain, Frances E., **Phil Davignon**, Thomas R. Henzel, Andrea Ciccone, and Aaron Young. "The Special Purpose Examination: An Evaluation of Physicians Taking SPEX and their Pass Rates." *Journal of Medical Regulation* 100, no. 1 (2014) 9-14.
- Young, Aaron, **Phil Davignon**, Margaret B. Hansen, and Mark A. Eggen. "State Medical Boards' Perceptions of a Minimum Data Set and Current Practices for Collecting Physician Information." *Journal of Medical Regulation* 99, no. 4 (2013) 40-45.
- Davignon, Phil**. "The Effects of R-rated Movies on Adolescent and Young Adult Religiosity: Media as Self-Socialization." *Review of Religious Research* 55, no. 4 (2013) 615-28.
- Davignon, Phil**. "Religiosity as a Potential Moderator of the Effects of Media on Delinquency." *Sociological Spectrum* 33, no. 6 (2013) 1-12.
- Davignon, Phil**, Perry L. Glanzer, and P. Jesse Rine. "Assessing the Denominational Identity of American Evangelical Colleges and Universities, Part III: The Student Experience." *Christian Higher Education* 12, no. 5 (2013) 315-330.
- Rine, Jesse P., Perry L. Glanzer, and **Phil Davignon**. "Assessing the Denominational Identity of American Evangelical Colleges and Universities, Part II: Faculty Perspectives and Practices." *Christian Higher Education* 12, no. 4 (2013) 243-265.
- Glanzer, Perry L., P. Jesse Rine, and **Phil Davignon**. "Assessing the Denominational Identity of American Evangelical Colleges and Universities, Part I: Denominational Patronage and Institutional Inquiry." *Christian Higher Education* 12, no 3 (2013) 181-202.
- Young, Aaron, Kelly Alfred, **Phil Davignon**, LaSharn Hughes, Lisa Robin, and Humayun J. Chaudhry. "Physician Survey Examining the Impact of an Educational Tool for Responsible Opioid Prescribing." *Journal of Opioid Management* 8, no. 2 (2013) 81-88.

GRANTS

- "The Eucharist and Intentional Community." \$13,790 awarded from the Calvin Institute for Christian Worship (2023-24).
- "The Culture of Death in Everyday Life: Exploring the Roots of Secularization." \$4,500 awarded from the Pew Research Program at Union University (2018).
- "Living Joyfully in the Modern World: The Role of Small Christian Communities." \$9,828 awarded from the Yale Center for Faith and Culture (2018).

HONORS AND AWARDS

- Newell Innovative Teaching Award (2022)
- Presidential Scholarship – Baylor University (2009-2014)
- Presidential Fellow – Baylor University (2011-2012)

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- “Communion and Community: The Decline and Revival of Embodiment in Church and Society” at the Society of Catholic Social Scientists annual meeting at Franciscan University of Steubenville on October 27, 2023.
- “Communion in Christ's Body: Recovering Community in the Modern Age” at the Symposium on Culture at Benedictine University on March 25, 2023.
- “Religious But Still Secular: How Treating Religion as a Virtue Changes the Debate Over Secularization” at the Society of Catholic Social Scientists annual meeting at Franciscan University of Steubenville on October 29, 2021.
- “The Logos of Social Structure: Communio Theology and Sociology” at the Society of Catholic Social Scientists annual meeting in Belmont, NC on October 27, 2018.
- “Joy in Intentional Community” at the Yale Center for Faith and Culture’s Future of Joy and the Good Life conference in New Haven, CT on August 1, 2018.
- “Re-thinking Causation: Challenging the Positivist Paradigm in Sociology” at the Mid-South Sociological Association’s annual meeting in Chattanooga, TN on October 20, 2017.
- “Predictors of Moral and Religious Pluralism Among American Adolescents” at the Southern Sociological Society’s annual meeting in Greenville, SC on March 31, 2017.
- “Critical Realism and Adolescent and Young Adult Religiosity” at the Christian Sociological Association’s annual meeting in Jackson, TN on June 10, 2016.
- “Religious Identity and Moral Worldviews Among American Adolescents” at the Association of Christians Teaching Sociology’s annual meeting in Philadelphia, PA on June 5, 2015.
- “Statistics on Medical Discipline” at the American Association for the History of Medicine’s annual meeting in Chicago, IL on May 10, 2014.
- “Liturgical Music Preferences and Theological Habitus” at the Southwest Social Science Association’s annual meeting in New Orleans on March 28, 2013.
- “The Challenges of Collecting Data on Freshman Retention” at the Association of Applied and Clinical Sociology annual meeting in New Orleans on October 14, 2011.
- “Cultural Broadening Theory Revisited: The Effects of Peers and Media on Adolescent Religiosity” at the Southwest Social Science Association’s annual meeting in Las Vegas on April 2, 2011.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- “Against the Ministry Industrial Complex, For the Local Membership.” *Front Porch Republic*. October 23, 2023.
- “The Culture of Death and the Practice of Everyday Life.” *Church Life Journal*. August 1, 2023.
- “Secular Formation in the Christian College Classroom.” *Christian Scholars Review Blog*. May 5,

2023.

“Misunderstanding the Rise of the Nones.” *Church Life Journal*. September 16, 2022.

“Truly ‘Another Life is Possible.’ ” *Front Porch Republic*. December 2, 2020.

“Finding Joy in Intentional Community.” *Front Porch Republic*. August 25, 2020.

COURSES TAUGHT

Principles of Sociology, Food, Culture, and Society, Gender and Sexuality, Sociology of Religion, The Examined Life, Social Theory, Justice (Honors Program), Social Deviance, Juvenile Justice, Social Research II, Media and Technology in Society, Introduction to Studying Families, Contemporary Issues in the Family, Strengthening Marriages and Families, Urban Sociology, Criminology

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Critical Realism and Human Flourishing Working Group – Yale University (2016-2017)

Critical Realism Summer Seminar – Yale University (June 2016)

Qualitative Research Summer Intensive – University of North Carolina (July 2018)

Leadership Union (2017-2018)

INSTITUTIONAL SERVICE

- Union University Faculty-in-Residence program (2020-2023)
- University taskforce on Biblical Anthropology (2023 – 2024)
- Chair – Department of Sociology and Family Studies (2017 – present)
- Advisor – Union University Students Engaging Culture club (2015 – present)
- Union University Institutional Review Board (2015-2017)
- Leadership Union advisory committee (2020 – 2022)
- Mentorship
 - New faculty mentor: Aaron Beasley, Micah Fern, Nate Daniels
 - Leadership Union mentor: Jacob Shatzer, Kevin Morgan

INVITED LECTURES AND PRESENTATIONS

“Witnessing to Truth in a Post-Truth Age.” Equip Conference. September 7, 2024.

“Be Transformed.” Union University Chapel. November 8, 2023.

“On Polarization.” Union University Honors Program—Wisdom Course. August 29, 2023.

“Nature, Culture, and Freedom.” Union University Nursing Program. December 2, 2022.

“On Scholarship.” Union University New Beginnings. 2022 – present.

“Navigating Controversial Topics.” Faculty Workshop. August 16, 2022.

“The Meaning of Male and Female.” The Bull Moose Society. April 26, 2021.

“The Culture of Death in Everyday Life.” Pew Research Luncheon. November 11, 2020.
 “Megachurch vs. Intentional Community.” School of Theology and Missions. October 3, 2019.
 “Implicit Associations and Substance Abuse.” Union School of Pharmacy. 2019 – present.
 “On Diversity.” Leadership Union. 2018 - present.
 “My Favorite Book: *The Great Divorce*.” Town and Gown lecture series. March 3, 2015.
 “Marital Conflict.” Town and Gown lecture series. April 30, 2015.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- Co-Principal Investigator for study of students and faculty at member institutions of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (2011-2013)
- Research Analyst for a study of retention at Baylor University (2010).
- Research Analyst at the Center for Community Research and Development (2009-2013)
- Research Assistant to the Dean of the Graduate School (2010-2013)
- Research Assistant studying student engagement and intent to re-enroll (2013)

MEDIA APPEARANCE AND REFERENCES

- Interviewed on Kresta in the Afternoon (August 2023)
- Interviewed on Mornings with Carmen (April 2023)
- Interviewed on Good Shepherd Catholic Radio’s *Free Expression* show (October 2022)
- Interviewed on Son Rise Morning Show (September 2022)
- Interviewed on intentional community for Archangel Radio’s morning show (2020)
- Interviewed on Bible Broadcasting Network’s *Weekend Connection* (2018)
- Research on religiosity and R-rated movies (2013) discussed by:
 - Christianity Today, Focus on the Family, Focus on the Family’s Plugged In, The Huffington Post, Lafayette Journal and Courier, News Talk 1230 AM - KWTX

PEER REVIEWER

- *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*
- *Review of Religious Research*
- *Sociology of Religion*
- *Journal of Religion and Society*
- *Christian Higher Education*
- *International Journal of Christianity and Education*

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- SAS
- SPSS
- Atlas.ti
- Qualtrics