

# Brad Vermurlen

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Calvin University  
Department of Sociology  
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Grand Rapids, MI 49546

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## Positions

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2023-present      Visiting Assistant Professor of Sociology, Calvin University  
2020-2023        Research Associate, Department of Sociology, University of Texas at Austin

### *Affiliations and Fellowships*

2023-present      Affiliated Scholar, Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies, University of Southern California  
2019-2022        Generations in Dialogue Fellow, Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies, University of Southern California  
2016-2020        Director of Social Research, Docent Research Group  
2014-2016        Visiting Graduate Student, Department of Sociology, University of Michigan–Ann Arbor  
2008-2013        Presidential Fellow, Department of Sociology, University of Notre Dame

## Education

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Ph.D.      Sociology, University of Notre Dame, 2016  
M.A.      Sociology, University of Notre Dame, 2010  
B.A.      Sociology, University of Michigan–Ann Arbor, 2008  
            With Highest Honors, Highest Distinction, and Phi Beta Kappa  
            Minor: Philosophy

## Areas of Specialization

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Religion, especially Christianity in the United States; Culture; Morality; Research Methods; Sociological Theory; Cognitive Sociology; Movements; Christian Thought; Philosophies of Social Science; Sexuality/Gender; Political Philosophy

## Publications

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### Book

2020      Brad Vermurlen. *Reformed Resurgence: The New Calvinist Movement and the Battle Over American Evangelicalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.  
            Reviewed (so far) in *American Journal of Sociology*; *The Gospel Coalition*; *Themelios*; *Journal for Christian Scholarship*; *Trinity Journal*

## Peer Reviewed Articles

- 2023 Brad Vermurlen, Mark Regnerus, and Stephen Cranney. "The Ongoing Conservative Turn in the American Catholic Priesthood." *Sociological Spectrum* 43(2-3): 72-88.
- 2023 Brad Vermurlen, Mark Regnerus, and Stephen Cranney. "Is the Catholic Church in America Experiencing Internal Secularization? Priests' Assessments of Pope Francis and the Condition of the Church." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 62(2): 397-418.
- 2023 Brad Vermurlen. "Religious Marketing Revisited: What Recent Scholarship on Calvinist Evangelical Leaders Tells Us." *Journal of Sociology and Christianity* 13(1): 11-34.
- 2022 Mark Regnerus and Brad Vermurlen. "Attitudes in the U.S. Toward Hormonal and/or Surgical Interventions for Adolescents Experiencing Gender Dysphoria." *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 51(4): 1891-1902.  
Coverage in *The Washington Post*; *Religion News Service*; *World Magazine*; *The Gospel Coalition*
- 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 and Book Chapters

- 2024 Brad Vermurlen. "Sociology, Christianity, and Critical Realism," in *The Routledge International Handbook of Sociology and Christianity*. Ed., Dennis Hiebert. New York: Routledge. pp. 141-152.
- 2023 Brad Vermurlen. Entry on "Assumption," in *The Sage Encyclopedia of Theory in STEM*. Ed., James Mattingly. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. pp. 41-45.
- 2015 Brad Vermurlen. "Perceptions of and Objections to Christianity Among Unchurched and Dechurched Adults." *Review of Religious Research* 57(1): 161-162.

## Book Reviews

- 2023 Brad Vermurlen. Review of: *Nonverts: The Making of Ex-Christian America*. By Stephen Bullivant. New York: Oxford University Press. *Public Discourse*.
- 2020 Brad Vermurlen. Review of: *Christianity and Sociological Theory: Reclaiming the Promise*. By Joseph A. Scimecca. New York: Routledge. *Contemporary Sociology* 49(1): 85-87.
- 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.

### Research Reports

- 2021 Brad Vermurlen, Stephen Cranney, and Mark Regnerus. "Introducing the 2021 Survey of American Catholic Priests: Overview and Selected Findings."  
Coverage in *The Wall Street Journal*; *Catholic News Agency/National Catholic Register*; *The American Spectator*; *America: The Jesuit Review*; *Aleteia*; *National Catholic Reporter*
- 2020 Brad Vermurlen. *Deconversion and Exvangelicals*. Austin, TX: Docent Research Group, 13 pp.
- 2019 Brad Vermurlen and Steve Rustin. *The New South: Religious, Cultural, and Economic Factors Influencing Church Planting*. Austin, TX: Docent Research Group, 30 pp.
- 2019 Brad Vermurlen and Todd Ferguson. *A Sociological Overview of the State of American Religion, especially Evangelicalism*. Austin, TX: Docent Research Group, 51 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.

### Pieces in Magazines, Online, etc.

- 2021 Brad Vermurlen. "Catholic Priests in the United States: Increasingly Conservative and More Pessimistic." *Public Discourse*.
- 2018 Brad Vermurlen. "The Human Space Between Activism and Objectivity in American Sociology." *Public Discourse*. Editor-in-Chief: Ryan Anderson.
- 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.

### Works in Progress

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#### Articles

- Mark Regnerus, Brad Vermurlen, and Stephen Cranney. "Is Homosexuality in the Priesthood Diminishing? Evidence from Two Surveys of Catholic Priests in the United States." (Under review)

Brad Vermurlen and Yongguang Xue. “Entangled Religious Modernities: Western Entrepreneurs and the Rise of Conservative Presbyterianism in Urban China.”

### **Book Manuscript**

Brad Vermurlen and William McMillan. *Redeemer: Deliberate Christianity from Manhattan to the World*. (Case study of Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 40% complete)

### **Teaching Experience**

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Instructor of Record

#### **Calvin University**

Introduction to Sociology (Fall 2023, Spring 2024)

Sociological Theory (Fall 2023)

Social Science Statistics (Fall 2023, Spring 2024)

Guest Lecturer

#### **The University of Texas at Austin**

Catholic Social Thought (Fall 2022)

#### **University of Michigan–Ann Arbor**

Sociology of Religion (several occasions)

Teaching Assistant

#### **University of Notre Dame**

Media and Society (Fall 2011)

### **Awards and Grants**

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- 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 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 Vanderbilt Provost’s Fellowship for Under-Represented Minorities, \$50,000 [declined]

## **Invited Lectures**

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- 2024 “Where is Sociology?” Guest lecture at Grove City College. Grove City, PA.
- 2022 “Social Structure and Sin in Catholic Social Thought.” Guest lecture at the University of Texas at Austin. (via zoom)
- 2022 “Reflections on My Experience as a Generations in Dialogue Fellow.” Presented to the board of directors for the Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies at USC.
- 2020 “Is a Christian Sociology Possible?” Upper Room Gathering.
- 2020 “Is a Christian Sociology Possible?” Delivered at a meeting of the Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies. Los Altos, CA.
- 2019 “Survey of Houston’s First: Overview and Findings.” Presented to staff at Houston’s First Baptist Church. Houston, Texas.
- 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.

## **Conference Presentations (Since 2010)**

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- 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.

### Professional Service

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#### Peer Reviewer:

- *American Sociological Review*
- *Journal of Homosexuality*
- *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*
- *Review of Religious Research*
- *Archives of Sexual Behavior*
- *Religions*
- *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change*
- *Gender & Society*
- *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*

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

### Podcasts and Other Media Appearances

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- 2024 “Looking Back on the Reformed Resurgence.” Interview about my 2020 book with Full Proof Theology podcast, hosted by Chase Davis, <https://fullprooftheology.buzzsprout.com/1249781/14815436-133-brad-vermurlen-looking-back-on-the-reformed-resurgence>.
- 2023 Interviewed for and quoted in a retrospective piece about the New Calvinist/YRR religious movement. *Religion News Service*, <https://religionnews.com/2023/06/06/with-kellers-death-young-restless-and-reformed-new-calvinists-are-at-a-crossroads/>.
- 2023 Interviewed for and quoted in an audio segment on religion and political activities. *The Daily Wire*, <https://www.dailywire.com/podcasts/morning-wire/political-engagement-by-religion-critical-drug-shortages-5-27-23>.

- 2023 “Seven Kinds of Evangelicalism in the United States.” Interview with Restless: A Postmortem on the Young, Restless and Reformed, hosted by Matthew Cline and Michael Bowman, <https://restlesspodcast.podbean.com/e/the-7-groups-in-evangelicalism-with-brad-verburlen/>.
- 2022 “Scholar Q&A: Brad Vermurlen, Ph.D.” A short interview with Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies at USC regarding the 2021 Survey of American Catholic Priests, <https://dornsife.usc.edu/iacs/scholar-qa-brad-verburlen-phd/>.
- 2021 “Reformed Resurgence.” Interview about my book with Mere Fidelity podcast, hosted by Matthew Lee Anderson and Derek Rishmawy, <https://mereorthodoxy.com/reformed-resurgence-with-brad-verburlen/>.
- 2021 “YRR Church in New York, Minneapolis, and Seattle with Brad Vermurlen.” Interview with Restless: A Postmortem on the Young, Restless and Reformed, hosted by Matthew Cline and Michael Bowman, <https://restlesspodcast.podbean.com/e/yrr-church-in-new-york-minneapolis-and-seattle-with-brad-verburlen/>.
- 2021 “Cultural Entropy and Religious Strength.” Interview with Restless: A Postmortem on the Young, Restless and Reformed, hosted by Matthew Cline and Michael Bowman, <https://restlesspodcast.podbean.com/e/cultural-entropy-and-religious-strength-with-brad-verburlen/>.
- 2021 “The Ways We Secularize.” Interview with Restless: A Postmortem on the Young, Restless and Reformed, hosted by Matthew Cline and Michael Bowman, <https://restlesspodcast.podbean.com/e/the-ways-we-secularize-with-brad-verburlen/>.
- 2021 Quoted in an article regarding evangelical Protestantism and adoption for same-sex couples on Religion Unplugged, by Chelsea Langston Bombino, <https://religionunplugged.com/news/2021/3/10/how-the-equality-act-would-impact-faith-based-child-placement-agencies>.
- 2021 “Reformed Resurgence.” Interview about my book with The Masculinist, aired live on YouTube, hosted by Aaron Renn, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eNA0ic1asbw>.
- 2021 “Reformed Resurgence.” Interview about my book with Restless: A Postmortem on the Young, Restless and Reformed, hosted by Matthew Cline and Michael Bowman, <https://restlesspodcast.podbean.com/e/the-reformed-resurgence-with-brad-verburlen/>.
- 2021 “Reformed Resurgence.” Interview about my book with the New Books Network, hosted by Ryan Shelton, <https://newbooksnetwork.com/reformed-resurgence>.
- 2020 “Reformed Resurgence.” Interview about my book with Gospelbound podcast, The Gospel Coalition, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/podcasts/gospelbound/new-calvinists-and-the-battle-for-evangelicalism/>.
- 2019 Interviewed for and quoted in *Religion News Service*, “From cruise ships to Trump’s hotel, Calvinist Christian nationalism is making moves,” by Jack Jenkins,

<https://religionnews.com/2019/07/08/from-cruise-ships-to-trumps-hotel-calvinist-christian-nationalism-is-making-moves/>.

2014 Quoted in an article in *The Huffington Post*, “Calvinism and Conflict,” by Martin Marty, [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/calvinism-and-conflict\\_b\\_4677124](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/calvinism-and-conflict_b_4677124).

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, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/04/us/a-calvinist-revival-for-evangelicals.html>.

## **Research and Consulting for Christian Organizations**

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Docent Research Group  
February 2009-April 2020  
Advisor: Dr. Glenn Lucke

\*Note: My willingness to provide research or consulting for a church should not be taken to imply that I agree with all of its theological, ecclesial, social, political, or moral convictions.

### **Selected Research Projects (since 2016):**

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.

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.

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 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.

RockPointe Church, Flower Mound, TX. Pastor Ron Holton: I designed, administered, and analyzed an online survey of RockPointe's leaders and congregants on a wide variety of topics. Each respondent received a copy of their responses for later use in the church's discipleship program. The survey included 97 questions and garnered 741 responses. February-April 2018.

River Valley Church, Minneapolis, MN. Pastor Rob Ketterling: I designed and managed a qualitative project about how very large churches assimilate guests and newcomers. The project included phone interviews with six "gigachurches." March-April 2018. With Steve Rustin.

The Village Church, Dallas/Fort Worth, TX. Pastor Matt Chandler: I designed and managed a qualitative interview project about how megachurches handle on-campus classes versus off-campus groups. I analyzed the interview transcripts from ten churches and produced the written report detailing the findings. February-August 2018. Interviews conducted by Glenn Lucke.

Cross Timbers Church, Argyle, TX. Pastor Toby Slough: I wrote, conducted, and analyzed an online survey of Cross Timbers' leaders and congregants about a variety of topics. The survey included 68 questions and garnered 1,051 responses. The deliverables were a 94-page report with commentary and multivariate analyses along with the raw data file. August-November 2018.

The Austin Stone Community Church, Austin, TX. Pastor Matt Carter: I managed and oversaw the quantitative analysis of the church's own internal survey data, gathered annually for five years at the downtown campus. The report weighted the data based on known service attendance and showed trends over time using tables and charts. December 2018. With Laurie DeRose.

Vintage Church, Raleigh, NC. Pastor Tyler Jones: I managed and contributed to a 30-page research brief on cultural, demographic, economic, and religious aspects of the present American South, and how those insights might inform church planting. The report was used for the Acts 29 Carolinas Regional Conference on "the New South." March 2019. With Steve Rustin.

Houston's First Baptist Church, Houston, TX. Pastor Gregg Matte: I wrote, conducted, and analyzed an online survey of the entire church regarding a variety of topics. The survey included 80 questions and garnered 2,177 responses. The deliverables were a 103-page report with commentary and multivariate analyses along with the raw data file. August 2018-July 2019.

White Horse Inn, Escondido, CA. Dr. Michael Horton: I designed, conducted, and analyzed an online survey of the client's subscriber email-list for their subsidiary organization, "Core Christianity." The survey garnered more than 3,100 responses, which helped the client understand the kinds of people "Core Christianity" is currently engaging. February-March 2020.

## Misc. Information

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Citizenship: United States of America

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7589-7252>

Languages: Intermediate German

## Professional Memberships

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Heterodox Academy

Religious Research Association

## References

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