

Herbert Robinson Marbury
Associate Professor of Hebrew Bible

Vanderbilt Divinity School
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Education

Vanderbilt University, The Graduate School, Nashville, TN, M.A. (1999), Ph.D. (2003)
Hebrew Bible (major), Ethics (minor) Dissertation:

“The Separatist Rhetoric of the Ezra-Nehemiah Corpus: Its Imperial,
Aristocratic, and Cultic Significations” (2003).

Adviser, Renita J. Weems

Gammon-Interdenominational Theological Center, Atlanta, GA, M.Div. with honors
(1994), Concentration: Old Testament

Emory University, Atlanta, GA, B.A. (1991), Majors: English Literature; African
American Studies

Academic Experience

Associate Professor of Hebrew Bible, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN, 12/2013-
present

Assistant Professor of Hebrew Bible, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN, 8/2006-
12/2013

Research Professor of Hebrew Bible, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN,
8/2005/2006

University Chaplain/Director of Religious Life, Clark Atlanta University, Atlanta, GA,
8/2001-5/2006

Assistant Professor of Religion, Clark Atlanta University, Atlanta, GA 08/2001-5/2005

Instructor for *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* course for M.T.S./M.Div. students,
Vanderbilt University Divinity School, Fall Semester, 2000

Visiting Instructor in Old Testament, American Baptist College, Nashville, TN, 1999-
2001

Instructor for *Biblical Criticism* course for M.T.S./M.Div. program, Vanderbilt University, 1999

Teaching Assistant, *Literature, Religion, and Faith of Ancient Israel* course for M.T.S./M.Div. students, Vanderbilt University Divinity School, Fall, 1998 for Prof. Renita J. Weems

Ecclesial and Other Professional Experience:

Faculty Director, Thriving Congregations Project: Educating Ecclesial Communities Toward Justice, A Lilly Endowment Initiative, American Baptist College (Nashville, TN), 2020-present

Faculty Mentor, Doctor of Ministry Program, Payne Theological Seminary (Wilberforce, OH), 2017-Present. Focus: Ethics and Ecclesial Empowerment, with Prof. Victor Anderson

Faculty Mentor, Doctor of Ministry Program, United Theological Seminary (Dayton, OH), 2004-2007. Focus: The Black Church and Social and Civic Empowerment, with Prof. Victor Anderson

Pastor, Old National United Methodist Church (Riverdale, GA), 1992-1997

Refugee Resettlement Coordinator, The United Methodist Church, North Georgia Conference, 1995-1997

Academic Publications:

Books:

Imperial Dominion and Priestly Genius: Coercion, Accommodation, and Resistance in the Divorce Rhetoric of Ezra-Nehemiah, (Upland, CA: Sopher Press, 2012). 141 pages

Pillars of Cloud and Fire: The Politics of Exodus in the African American Quest for Freedom, a single-authored volume. (New York: New York University Press, 2015). 272 pages

Chapters in Books:

“Seeking Justice: Hearing Aretha Franklin’s Mary, Martha and Moses Again,” in *Moved by the Spirit: Religion and the Movement for Black Lives*. Christophe Ringer, Teresa L. Smallwood, and Emilie M. Townes (eds.), Washington, D.C.: Lexington Books, *Forthcoming*

“Write the Vision! Make it Plain,” in *The Spirit and Social Justice*. Antipas L. Harris, (ed.), Landham MD, Seymour Press, 2019

“Reading Persian Dominion in Nehemiah: Multivalent Language, Co-Option, Resistance, and Cultural Survival,” in *Focusing Biblical Studies: The Crucial Nature of the Persian and Hellenistic Periods: Essays in Honor of Douglas A. Knight*. Jon L. Berquist and Alice W. Hunt (eds.), New York: T&T Clark, 2012: 159-176

“The Strange Woman in Persian Yehud: A Reading of Proverbs 7,” in *Approaching Yehud: New Approaches to the Persian Period*. Jon L. Berquist (ed.), Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007: 167-182

Articles, Essays, and Other Academic Writing:

“The Bible as Sacred Africana Text,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible in Africa and the African Diaspora*. Hugh R. Page (ed.) New York: Oxford University Press, Forthcoming (5000 Words)

“Exogamy and Divorce in Ezra and Nehemiah,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Historical Books of the Hebrew Bible*. Brad E. Kelle and Brent A. Strawn (eds.), New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. (5000 Words)

“Race, Class, and Ethnicity: Hebrew Bible” in *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Gender Studies*. Julia O’Brien and Ken Stone (eds.), New York: Oxford University Press, 2014

“Ezra-Nehemiah,” in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity*. Daniel Patte (ed.), New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010: 404-405

“Ezra and Nehemiah,” in *The Africana Bible: Reading Israel’s Scriptures from Africa and the African Diaspora*. Hugh R. Page (ed.), Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010: 280-285

“Ezra,” in *The Wesley Study Bible*. Joel B. Green and William H. Willimon (eds.), Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2009: 569-582

“Nehemiah,” in *The Wesley Study Bible*. Joel B. Green and William H. Willimon (eds.), Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2009: 583-600

“Wisdom in the Ancient World,” *Contemporary American Religion*. Co-authored with Renita J. Weems. Wade Clark Roof (ed.), Contemporary American Religion. New York: Macmillan Library Reference USA, 2000

“Herod,” “Herod Antipas,” “John the Baptist,” in *From Polis to Empire: c. 800 B.C. 500 A.D.* Andrew G. Traver (ed.), Greenwood Press, 2000

Reviews:

Character Ethics and the Old Testament: Moral Dimensions of Scripture. M. Daniel Carroll R. and Jacqueline E. Lapsley. (eds.), *Biblical Interpretation* 16 (2008): 383-385

Works in Progress:

The Word Made Flesh: Biblical Rhetoric in the Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr. an edited volume with Lewis V. Baldwin

Occasional Writing:

Online Lectionary entries for the African American Lectionary:

<http://www.theafricanamericanlectionary.org/>

“Single’s Sunday,” August 2009

“Earth Day,” April 2009

“Children’s Day,” August 2008

“Martin Luther King Day,” August 2008

“God’s Affirming and Subversive Word to the Marginalized,” *The Circuit Rider*, The United Methodist Publishing House, May/June 2007

Named and Invited Academic Lectures:

“Zora Neale Hurston: Exodus Exegete,” Elie Wiesel Memorial Lecture, Boston University, Boston, MA, November 2020

“Sacred Texts and Contested Canons: A Biblical Witness in Polarized Times,” Kelso Lecture, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, PA February 2019

“Sacred Canons, Diverging Hermeneutics,” Biblical Scholars Lecture Series, St. Thomas University, Miami FL, September 2017

“Hermeneutical Frames,” Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Vanderbilt University,
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Nashville, TN, May 2017

“Reading Joshua’s Generation: Hermeneutics and Counter-History,” Bishop E.T. Dixon Lecture, Huston-Tillotson University, Austin, TX, January 2015, January 2021

“Amos: Merging the Horizons of Eighth and Twenty-First Centuries in the Public Square,” Thirkield Jones Lecture, Gammon Theological Seminary, Atlanta, GA, October 2010

Papers and Presentations:

International Presentations:

"The Question of Faith-Based Funding: Reading Church and State Engagement in Nehemiah 13," Oxford Institute for Methodist Theological Studies, Oxford, UK, July, 2007

“Five Loaves and Two Fish, The Power of a Child: Rethinking The Role of Youth in the Zimbabwean AIDS Crisis,” HIV/AIDS Youth Education and Awareness Conference of The General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church in Chinoyhi, Zimbabwe, August 2000

“Sorry Comforters: The Friends of Job and the Church’s Response to the HIV/AIDS Crisis in Southern Africa,” HIV/AIDS Education and Action Conference of The General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church in Kadoma, Zimbabwe, January 2000

National and Regional Professional Conferences:

“Power in Archival Historiography: A Review of *Jewish Archival Historiography*,” Ezra-Nehemiah Section, Society of Biblical Literature, 2021

“From Stony the Road to Ignoring One’s Cultural Bias: Evolution of a Hermeneutic,” African American Biblical Hermeneutics Section, Society of Biblical Literature, San Antonio, November 2021

“African American Biblical Hermeneutics: A History in Method,” Society of Biblical

Literature Annual Meeting, San Antonio, November 2016

Response to review session on *Pillars of Cloud and Fire: The Politics of Exodus in African American Biblical Interpretation*, African American Biblical Hermeneutics Section, Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, San Antonio, November 2016

“The Evolution of Randall C. Bailey: Subverting the Master’s Tools,”
Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Atlanta, November 2015

“Martin Luther King: Unexplored Biblical Hermeneut,” Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, San Diego, November 2014

"When the Waters Recede: Reading Exile and Return in Ezra after Katrina," Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, New Orleans, November 2009

"Nehemiah, Jerusalem, and the Economic Exigencies of Persian Dominion," Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion Annual Meeting, Greensboro, NC, March, 2009

"The Play of Multivalent Rhetoric: The Political and Priestly Significations of Ezra 9," Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA November 2003

“Double Duty Discourse: Priestly Rhetoric and Economic Policy in Nehemiah and Persian Yehud,” Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Toronto, ON, November, 2002

“Regulating Boundaries and Bodies in Colonial Judah: A Reading of the Curses of Deuteronomy 27,” Southeastern Regional SBL (SECSOR), Atlanta, GA, March 2000

Other Presentations:

“Biblical Scholarship in the Current Culture War,” panel presentation for Making It Plain: The Sacred Tradition and Civil Discourse of African American Biblical Interpretation, Seminary of the Southwest, Austin TX, March 2021

Harriet Washington’s *Medical Apartheid: A Biblical Response*,” panel presentation for the Scholars Roundtable II: Community Engagement and Prophetic Response, a project of the Public Theology and Racial Justice Collaborative, Vanderbilt University, August 2020

“Biblical Hermeneutic for this Moment of Justice,” panel presentation, What Dreams May Come Next: Harnessing the Prophetic Nature of Black Faith to Cultivate a Transformed Future, Vanderbilt University, June 2020

“Biblical Interpretation for the Work of Racial Justice,” Intensive for The Public Theology and Racial Justice Collaborative, Vanderbilt University, May 2019

“Explorations in African American Biblical Hermeneutics,” Chicago Theological Seminary, May 2010

“Teaching Bible and Constructing Hermeneutical Identity,” Life Abundant: A Conference in Christian Practical Theology, Valparaiso Project on the Education and Formation of People in Faith, Lilly Endowment, February 2009

"Prophetic Spirituality and the Black Church," Kelly Miller Smith Institute on Black Church, Studies, Vanderbilt Divinity School, Nashville, TN, October 2007

“Situating the Self and Finding a Common Horizon: ‘Other’ Voices in Biblical Interpretation,” Relevant Religion Series, Scarritt-Bennett Center, Nashville, TN, February 2007

"The Black Church: What's Going on with Class, Gender and Freedom?" Kelly Miller Smith Institute on Black Church Studies, Nashville, TN, October 2006

“African American Biblical Interpretation: Discourses in Resistance,” Community Breakfast, Vanderbilt Divinity School, Nashville TN, February 2006

“Engaging Sexual Violence in the Bible: Hermeneutic for the Black Church,” Black Church and Human Sexuality conference sponsored by the Kelly Miller Smith Institute, Vanderbilt University, November 2000

“The Seams of Job: Weaving Together Prose and Poetry in the Skeptical Corpus of Israel’s Wisdom Literature,” Interdenominational Theological Center, November, 1997

“From the J Writer to Jamnia: A History of the Pentateuch,” Interdenominational Theological Center, November 1996

Fellowships and Honors:

The 2019 Vanderbilt Chancellor’s Award for Research in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion for *Pillars of Cloud and Fire: The Politics of Exodus in African American Biblical Interpretation*. New York: NYU Press

2017-2018 Provost Research Studio Award, Vanderbilt University

The Louisville Institute, Book Grant. \$40,000 awarded for the book project, *Pillars of Cloud and Fire: The Politics of Exodus in African American Biblical Interpretation*, 2012

Vanderbilt University, The Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities. Faculty Fellow, 2012-2013

The United Methodist Church, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. Dempster Fellow, 1998-1999 and 1999-2000

Vanderbilt University, Dean's Graduate Fellow, 1997, 1998, 1999

The Fund for Theological Education, Dissertation Fellow, 2000-2001

The United Methodist Higher Education Foundation, Chaplain of the Year, 2004

Academic Consultations:

Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Religion and Theology, Wabash Consultation for Pre-tenured Faculty in Theological Schools, Crawfordsville, IN, 2009-2010

Professional Affiliations:

Society for the Study of Black Religion (2017-present)
Society of Biblical Literature (1994-present)
American Academy of Religion (1998-present)
American Schools of Oriental Research (2002-2016)

Courses:

Hebrew (Fall 2000)
Intro to Hebrew Bible/Old Testament (Fall 2006, Fall 2007, Fall 2010, Fall 2013, Fall 2017, Fall 2018, Fall 2021)
Biblical Criticism (Fall 1999, Spring 2000)
History of Ancient Israel (Fall 2003)
Amos and Justice (Spring 2006)
Minor Prophets (Fall 2000, Fall 2014)
African American Biblical Hermeneutics I (Fall 2006, Fall 2008, Summer 2010, Fall 2010, Fall 2014, Fall 2020)
African American Biblical Hermeneutics II (Spring 2011, Spring 2015, Spring 2017), Spring 2021
Ezra-Nehemiah (Spring 2008, Spring 2016, Spring 2018)
Core Seminar for Theology and Practice (Fall 2007, Spring 2008)
Senior Seminar (Fall 2008, Spring 2009)
Empire and Canon (Spring 2007, Fall 2009, Spring 2014, Fall 2015) (Fall 2018, Fall 2019, Spring 2021)

Bible in Black and Womanist Theologies (Fall 2009) Intermediate
Hebrew (Spring 2011)
Old Testament Theology (Spring 2011, Spring 2014)
Exodus in African American Popular Interpretation (Spring 2012, Fall 2015, Spring 2019)
Song of Songs (Spring 2005, Spring 2015)
Exegesis (Spring 2017)
Eighth Century Prophets (Spring 2014, Summer 2017, Fall 2020, Fall 2021)
Foundations for Theological Education (Fall 2018, Fall 2019)
Readings in Hebrew Bible (Spring 2019)

Academic Service:

Service to the Guild:

American Academy of Religion, Member, Committee on Professional Conduct, 2020-2021

Society of Biblical Literature, African American Biblical Hermeneutics Section. member 1997-present, Section Co-Chair 2012-2017, Chair 2018

Society of Biblical Literature, Steering Committee, Social Scientific Criticism of the Second Temple Period section, 2001-2006

Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion Steering Committee, Hebrew Bible Section, 2000-2009

Vanderbilt:

Editorial Committee, Vanderbilt University Press, 2018-2021

Faculty Committee for Personnel and Policy, 2014-2016, 2017-2018, 2021-present

Co-Chair, Task Force review and revision of the Commitments and Living the Commitments, 2016-present

Planning Committee for the Vanderbilt Divinity School Public Theology and Racial Justice Collaborative, 2016-2021

Faculty Chair, Vanderbilt Divinity School, 2014-2015, 2015-2016

Curriculum Transformation Committee, 2014-2017

Director, Hebrew Bible Area and representative for Graduate Policy and Admissions Committee, Vanderbilt Divinity School, 2010-2011, 2014-2015, 2017-2018

Committee for Institutional Advancement, Vanderbilt Divinity School, 2014-2015

Steering Committee, Theology and Practice Program, Vanderbilt Divinity School, 2014-2015, 2015-2016, 2017-2018

Search Committees at Vanderbilt Divinity School: (chair) for senior position in Homiletics and New Testament 2021-2022; for senior position in Hebrew Bible, 2014; for senior position in Practical Theology, 2012; for senior position in Homiletics, 2009; for position in Historical Studies, 2006

Colloquy Leader, Theology and Practice Program, Vanderbilt Divinity School, 2006-2007, 2009-2010

Wabash Seminar on Race and Diversity: Educating for a Multicultural Institution, Vanderbilt University, 2007-2008

Board Member, The Carpenter Program for Gender and Sexuality, Vanderbilt Divinity School, 2007-18

Admissions Committee, Vanderbilt Divinity School, 2006-2007, 2007-2008

Academic Programs Committee, Vanderbilt Divinity School, 2006-2007, 2013-2014

Institutional Planning Committee, Vanderbilt Divinity School, 2014-2015, 2015-2016

Service to the Profession:

Oxford Institute for Methodist Studies, Vanderbilt Faculty Representative, Steering Committee, Oxford, UK, 2007-2012

The Fund for Theological Education, Conference Faculty, 2009 Doctoral Conference

The Fund for Theological Education, Fellowship Selection Committee, 2003-2006

Graduate Service:

Search committee member for theology, Vanderbilt Divinity School, Nashville, TN, 2001

Graduate Assistant Steering Committee, Electronic Tools and Ancient Near Eastern Archives (ETANA) project

Bibliographer, Hebrew Bible Area, Vanderbilt Divinity Library, 1999-2001

Community Involvement:*Lectures and Talks*

“The Question of Justice and Biblical Interpretation,” Call Lives of Meaning and Purpose, A Lily Project, American Baptist College, June 2019

“The Politics of Exodus in African American Biblical Interpretation,” The Temple, Nashville, TN May, 2017

Baccalaureate Address, Clark Atlanta University, Atlanta, GA 2016

“Social Justice and the Black Church,” American Baptist College, Nashville, TN February, 2016

“Between Nashville and Harare: The Bible in Cross-Cultural Dialogue,” Second Presbyterian, Nashville, TN May 2007

Commencement Address, American Baptist College, Nashville, TN, May, 2006

Regular and Occasional Preaching Engagements

Gordon Memorial United Methodist Church, Nashville, TN Metropolitan Interdenominational Church, Nashville TN

Seay-Hubbard United Methodist Church, Nashville, TN

Ebenezer United Methodist Church, Nashville, TN

Hobson United Methodist Church, Nashville, TN Hoosier

Memorial United Methodist Church, Atlanta, GA

Kelley Chapel United Methodist Church, Decatur, GA

Other Related Community Involvement

Member, Board of Directors, Wesley-Canterbury Fellowship, Vanderbilt University

Faculty Consultant for the Thomas-Shockley Theological Academy of the General Board of Higher Education, The United Methodist Church

Ongoing Projects:

Participation in the Archaeological Excavations of the Megiddo Expedition, Megiddo, Israel and Jezreel, Israel

Professional Credentials:

Elder in Full Connection, North GA Conference, UMC 1997-present

Probationary Member, North GA Conference, UMC 1995-1997