

Karl A. Plank

J. W. Cannon Professor of Religion, Emeritus  
Davidson College  
Davidson, North Carolina 28035-7014

## 1. Education

Vanderbilt University	1977-83	Ph.D. ( <i>with distinction</i> )
Vanderbilt University	1977-80	M.A.
Vanderbilt University	1974-77	M.Div. ( <i>first honors</i> )
Hanover College	1970-74	B.A. ( <i>cum laude</i> )

## 2. Publications

### Books

#### Academic:

The Fact of the Cage: Reading and Redemption in David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest*. An interpretation of Wallace's signature novel from the perspective of the ethics of fiction. New York and London: Routledge, 2021.

Mother of the Wire Fence. Inside and Outside the Holocaust. A hermeneutic study of holocaust art and poetry with particular emphasis on the dynamics of continuity and discontinuity. Louisville: Westminster / John Knox Press, 1994.

Paul and the Irony of Affliction. Semeia Studies. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987. A literary-critical study of 1 Cor 4:9-13 and theological reflections on irony.

#### Creative Writing:

The Grace of Falling Things: Poems (Grayson Books, 2024)

A Field, Part Arable. Fruita, Colorado: Lithic Press, 2017.

Runner-up, Sanger-Stewart Chapbook Prize, Slapering Hol Press, 2015; Finalist, Sow's Ear Poetry Review Chapbook Contest, 2015; Finalist, Blast Furnace Press Chapbook Contest; Finalist, Longleaf Press Chapbook Contest, 2016.

BOSS (Rewriting Rilke). St. Paul: Red Bird Chapbooks, 2017.

## Articles

- “Decentering the Holocaust: What Bezmozgis and Englander Are Talking About,” Religion & Literature 48/2 (2016): 133-153. An analysis of short stories by David Bezmozgis and Nathan Englander, raising the question of the centrality of the holocaust in Jewish identity.
- “Legal Authority and Verbal Harm in a Talmudic Narrative,” CCAR Journal: The Reform Jewish Quarterly 61/4 (2014): 47-56. A study of the oven of Akhnai dispute and its ramifications for understanding Jewish and contemporary legal theory and the ethics of verbal harm.
- “Why Dead Men Don’t Praise God: A Post-Holocaust Reckoning in the Poetry of Glatshteyn and Osherow,” Religion & Literature 42/3 (Autumn 2010): 75-91. A study of Psalm 115 and its interpretation in the post-holocaust poetry of Yankev Glatshteyn and Jacqueline Osherow.
- “Lou Silberman’s ‘The Theologian’s Task’: An Episode in the History of American Jewish Theology,” CCAR Journal: The Reform Jewish Quarterly 57/4 (Fall 2010): 84-97. An analysis of Lou Silberman’s 1963 keynote address to the CCAR concerning the importance, character, and method of Jewish theology.
- “By the Waters of a Death Camp: An Intertextual Reading of Psalm 137,” Literature and Theology 22 (June 2008): 180-194. A reading of Psalm 137 in light of the Simon Srebnik story as shown in Claude Lanzmann’s film, *Shoah*. Particular attention is given to the spatial dynamics of the psalm and the dilemma of memory in the aftermath of catastrophe.
- “Work and Unceasing Prayer: Some Monastic Views,” Spiritual Life 54/2 (Summer 2008): 79-92. A study of the relationship of work and prayer as seen in the Desert Fathers and in the Rule of Benedict.
- “‘When an A-Dieu Takes on a Face’: The Last Testament of Christian de Chergé, OCSO,” Spiritual Life 53/3 (Fall 2007): 136-147. A reading of Dom Christian’s testament in the context of his 1996 martyrdom and as a challenge to reenvision Christian-Muslim relations.
- “Breakthrough of the Word: Thomas Merton and Martin Buber on Reading the Bible,” in Merton and Judaism: Holiness in Words, ed. B. Bruteau (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2003), 127-155. A study of interpersonal hermeneutics as seen in the work of Merton and Buber, focusing upon the implication of the self in biblical revelation.

- "An Open Letter to Donald Grayston," in Merton and Judaism: Holiness in Words, ed. B. Bruteau (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2003), 105-108. A response to Donald Grayston's discussion of Merton, the Holocaust, and Jewish difference.
- "The Eclipse of Difference: Merton's Encounter with Judaism," in Merton and Judaism: Holiness in Words, ed. B. Bruteau (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2003), 67-82. A critical assessment of Merton's correspondence with Abraham Joshua Heschel, focusing upon the question of difference. Reprinted from Cistercian Studies 28 (1993): 179-91.
- "Thomas Merton and the Ethical Edge of Contemplation," in Anglican Theological Review 84/1 (2002): 113-126. A reading of Merton's contemplative perspective as a ground or precondition for moral responsibility.
- "Reynolds Price and the Struggle of 'People in Rooms,'" in The Quarterly Review 19/3 (Fall 1999): 293-302. A reading of Price's A Long and Happy Life and Good Hearts.
- "Ascent to Darker Hills: Psalm 121 and its Poetic Revision," in Journal of Literature and Theology 11/2 (1997): 152-167. An intertextual study of Psalm 121 and its appropriation in Rabbinic midrash and in D.H. Lawrence's "The Hills."
- "Scripture in a Sealed Railway-Car: A Poem of Dan Pagis," in Journal of Literature and Theology 7/4 (1993): 354-364. A study of the role of intertextuality and scriptural typology in Holocaust aesthetics as seen in Dan Pagis's "Written in Pencil in a Sealed Railway-Car."
- "The Eclipse of Difference: Merton's Encounter with Judaism," in Cistercian Studies 28/2 (1993): 179-91. A critical response to Merton's correspondence with Abraham Joshua Heschel, focusing upon the question of Jewish difference.
- "Unbroken Trains: Reflections on Michael Martin's Approaching History," in Shenandoah 43/2 (1993): 87-100. A reading of Michael Martin's poem cycle focusing upon the religious significance of poetic vocation and artifact.
- "The Survivor's Return: Reflections on Memory and Place," in Burning Memory: Times of Testing and Reckoning, ed. Alice L. Eckardt (New York: Pergamon Press, 1993), pp. 185-202. A reprint of Judaism 38 (1989): 263-77.
- "Jewish and Christian Relations," in Handbook of Themes for Preaching, ed. James W. Cox (Louisville: Westminster / John Knox, 1991), 145-48.
- "Thomas Merton and Hannah Arendt: Contemplation after Eichmann," in The Merton Annual 3 (1990): 121-150. A study of Merton's reading of Hannah Arendt with particular regard to the Eichmann trial and an assessment of contemplation as a response to the banality of evil.

- "The Human Face of Otherness: Reflections on Joseph and Mary (Matthew 1:18-25)," in Faith and History. Essays in Honor of Paul W. Meyer, eds. C. Cosgrove, J. Carroll, and E. Johnson (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 55-73. A study of the moral and theological dimensions of otherness contained in the Matthean birth narrative.
- "The Survivor's Return: Reflections on Memory and Place," Judaism 38 (1989): 263-277. Theological reflections on Holocaust survivors and their returns to the sites of victimization.
- "Broken Continuities: Night and 'White Crucifixion'," The Christian Century 104/32 (November 4, 1987): 963-966. An essay on the Jewish use of crucifixion imagery in holocaust literature and art.
- "Raging Wisdom: A Banner of Defiance Unfurled," Judaism 36/3 (Summer 1987): 323-330. A study of Israelite wisdom as protest literature.
- "Anamnesis," The Merton Seasonal 12/2 (Spring 1987): 2-3. An essay on remembrance focusing on Patrick Hart's First and Last Memories; reprinted in The Merton Annual 1 (1988): 351-353.
- "Harvesting the Fruits of Monastic Contemplation" Books and Religion 14 (October 1986): 8 and 10. A review-essay of the Thomas Merton correspondence.
- "Meditating on Merton's Eichmann," The Christian Century 102/30 (October 9, 1985): 894-895. An essay on Merton's depiction of Eichmann, focusing upon the madness of "sane" behavior.
- "Confronting the Unredeemed World: A Paradoxical Paul and His Modern Critics," Anglican Theological Review 67/2 (1985): 127-136. A study of the Pauline paradox as read by Nietzsche and Buber.
- "The Scarred Countenance: Inconstancy in the Book of Hosea," Judaism 32 (1983): 343-354. A study of Hosea's understanding of human frailty and the turning of God.
- "Resurrection Theology: The Corinthian Controversy Reexamined," Perspectives in Religious Studies 8 (1981): 41-54. An exegetical study of 1 Corinthians 15 and the problem of enthusiasm.
- "Reigning Victim, Threatened King: An Exploration of the King Parables of Shirta," Judaica. Beitrage zum Verstaendnis des juedischen Schicksals in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart 35 (1979): 172-83. A study of the ironic use of "king" imagery in the Rabbinic midrash of Exodus 15.

- "Of Unity and Distinction. An Exploration of the Theology of John Calvin with respect to a Christian Stance Toward Art," Cal ThJ 13 (1978): 16-37.

## Reviews

- Lee Sharkey, Walking Backwards in Consequence (March 30, 2017), <http://www.consequencemagazine.org/reviews/with-faces-drifting-off-to-the-war/>
- Efraim Sicher (ed.), Breaking Crystal. Writing and Memory after Auschwitz in Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies 18/1 (Fall 1999): 177-179.
- Ladislav Fuks, Mr. Theodore Mundstock, in CCAR Journal: A Reform Jewish Quarterly (Summer 1994) 89-91.
- Tom Rockmore, On Heidegger's Nazism and Philosophy, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Heidegger, Art and Politics, and Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut, Heidegger and Modernity, in Journal of Literature and Theology 7/3 (1993): 314-317.
- Bernard Brandon Scott, Hear Then The Parable. A Commentary on the Parables of Jesus, in Interpretation 45 (1991): 296-298.
- James Breech, Jesus and Postmodernism, in Journal of Literature and Theology 5 (1991): 412-414
- William Meninger, OCSO, 1012 Monastery Road. A Spiritual Journey, in Cistercian Studies (forthcoming)
- James E. Young, Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation, in Journal of Literature and Theology 4 (July 1990): 244-46.
- John R. Donahue, The Gospel in Parable, in Journal of Religion 70 (1990): 87- 88
- Frederick H. Borsch, Many Things in Parables. Extravagant Stories of New Community, in Theology Today 44 (1989): 509-10. Charles Talbert, Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary, in Critical Review of Books in Religion 2 (1989): 249-51.
- Pinchas Lapide and Ulrich Luz, Jesus in Two Perspectives. A Jewish-Christian Dialog, in Interpretation 41 (1987): 94-96.
- Eugene Boring, Truly Human / Truly Divine, in JAAR 54 (1986): 165

- Stephen Sharot, Messianism, Mysticism, and Magic in JAAR 52 (1984): 612.
- Susan Handelman, The Slayers of Moses. The Emergence of Rabbinic Interpretation in Modern Literary Theory, in JAAR 52 (1984): 204.
- Elie Wiesel, Four Hasidic Masters and their Struggle Against Melancholy, in Pastoral Psychology 29 (1981): 225-26.

## Poetry

- "What It Was," The Santa Clara Review 112:2 (forthcoming, 2025)
- "Lime Kiln," Connecticut River Review (forthcoming, 2025)
- "Clarity," The Louisville Review 95 (2024): 34
- "The Ends of Barns," Orange Blossom Review 13 (2024):  
<https://orangeblossomreview.org/journal/the-ends-of-barns/>
- "Star Gazing 1" and "Star Gazing 2," Route 7 Review (2024)
- "Precarity" and "Sky Above Clouds," MacQueen's Quinterly 24 (August 2024):  
<http://www.macqueensquinterly.com/MacQ24/Plank-Precarity.aspx> and  
<http://www.macqueensquinterly.com/MacQ24/Plank-Sky-Above.aspx>
- "One Year Later," Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel 27 (2024): 48
- "Waiting" and "Our Mother the Mountain," Spirit Lake Review (2024): 61-62
- "Song of a Dying Man," The Ocotillo Review 8.1 (2024): 50
- "Gravity and Grace," The Ocotillo Review 8.1 (2024): 51
- "Christ Our Passover," Dappled Things 19.1 (Caandlemas, 2024): 37
- "At the Reading of the Gospel," Barstow and Grand 7 (2023): 30
- "Doxology," Quiet Diamonds (Orchard Street Press, 2023), 31. Semi-finalist for the Malovrh-Fenlon Poetry Prize.
- "Prayer Before A Sermon in the Nave," Homage to Soren Kierkegaard: A Poetry Anthology, eds. Dana Gioia and Mary Grace Mangano (Wiseblood Press, 2023), 67.

- “And Also With You,” Valiant Scribe 3 (2022): 69
- “Our Sins, To Be Confessed,” Saint Katherine Review (forthcoming 2024)
- “Thy Kingdom Come,” Saint Katherine Review (November 16, 2023); <https://www.stkathreview.org/thy-kingdom-come/>
- “Grave Stones,” Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel 25 (2022): 152-154
- “The Sound of a Tree Falling As We Hear It,” Willows Wept Review 25 (2022): 51.
- “Echoing Impressions,” Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel 24 (2021), 163.
- “Olive Hill Flood,” River Heron Review 4.2 (2021), Best of the Net Nomination. <https://www.riverheronreview.com/issue-42#karl-plank>
- “Awaiting Rain,” basalt 15 (2021): 4
- “Janus 4: Guardian of our Breath,” basalt 15 (2021): 4
- “Impressions Revisited,” Tahoma Literary Review 20 (2021): 16
- “Janus 6: A Window is a Door,” Briar Cliff Review 32 (Spring 2021): 27
- “Sentences,” Tiferet Autumn/Winter 2019: 111-114
- “Quiet Night,” Jelly Bucket 9 (2019): 124
- “For the Time Being,” basalt 13/1 (2019): 4
- “Decalogue: Rules for Guests on the Earth and Below,” basalt 13/1(2019): 4
- “Neither Can Floods Drown It,” Zone 3 34/1 (2019): 50
- “Venus Rising in the City,” The Ekphrastic Review, July 20, 2019: <http://www.ekphrastic.net/ekphrastic/venus-rising-in-the-city-by-karl-plank>
- “First Kiss,” Indian River Review 6 (forthcoming 2019)
- “What Botticelli Did Not Portray,” Qu 9 (2018): 35
- “Wedding Night,” Potomac Review 63 (2018): 150-51

- “as when a mortal flees a lion,” Bluestem 28/1 (2018): 24
- “Options,” The McNeese Review 55 (2018) 196-199
- “Night Fight: Jabbok Ford,” Presence: A Journal of Catholic Poetry (2018): 89
- “He Stammers,” Saint Katherine Review, 6/2 (2018): 33-34
- “Night Prayer: Bethel,” Saint Katherine Review, 6/2 (2018): 35
- “How Hunger Sounds,” Ponder Review 1/2 (2017):10
- “Apophatic Prayer 3,” The Merton Seasonal 42/2 (2017): 11
- “But Still We Ate,” 12/2 New Madrid (2017): 59
- “Apophatic Prayer 2,” 12/2 New Madrid (2017): 58
- “Apophatic Prayer,” ARTS 28/2 (2017): 16
- “Mudmen,” Briar Cliff Review 29 (2017): 62
- “As A Mother Who Once Had A Child,” 8 Poetry South (2016): 73
- “Well-Lit,” Hospital Drive (Winter 2016-17):  
<http://hospitaldrive.org/2016/12/well-lit/>
- “Gift From A Mountain Field,” Pittsburgh Poetry Review 4 (2016): 78
- “Stability,” Kestrel 35 (Fall 2016): 57
- “Hedgerow,” Zone 3 31 (Spring 2016), 37.
- “After Eden: Hopper’s *Pennsylvania Coal Town*,” Rappahannock Review 3.1 (December 2015): <http://www.rappahannockreview.com/karl-plank/>
- “Obedience,” Notre Dame Review 41 (Winter, 2016): 88
- “Cave Air,” VDS Voices, August 4, 2015  
(<https://my.vanderbilt.edu/vanderbiltdivinity/2015/08/alumniae-tuesday-karl-plank/>)
- “Bonhoeffer, 1939,” The Cresset 78/4 (2015): 28

- “Blue Ghosts,” Exit 7 (2015): 15
- “The Sound of One Poem Tapping,” Spiritus 15 (October 2015): 240
- “Fireclay,” Still: The Journal (Fall 2015): <http://www.stilljournal.net/karl-plank-poetryhs.php>
- “Double-Exposure” and “Witnessed in the First Month of the Year,” New Madrid 9/2 (Summer 2014): 114-116
- “Gravity,” Beloit Poetry Journal 64/4 (Summer 2014): 8; (featured on Poetry Daily, June 2, 2014)
- “Tools of the Trade,” The Meadow (Summer 2014): 79
- “Empty Tomb,” The Anglican Theological Review 75/1 (1993): 116-17
- “Ash Wednesday,” The Anglican Theological Review 74/1 (1992): 68-69; reprinted in Beyond Lament. Poets of the World Bearing Witness to the Holocaust, ed. Marguerite Striar (Northwestern University, 1998): 336-339; and in Blood to Remember: American Poets on the Holocaust, ed. Charles Fishman (Time Being Books, 2007): 338-339.

#### Creative Non-Fiction

- “BOSS,” *Limestone: Prose, Poetry, Art* (Winter 2015): <http://limestone.as.uky.edu/content/boss-0>

#### Microfiction and Flash

- “Persimmon Weather,” Into the Void 18 (February 2021): 22
- “Imagine,” Rappahannock Review, 8.1 (December 2020): <https://rappahannockreview.com/issue-8-1/contents/fiction/karl-plank/>
- “When the Word Came,” *Helen: A Literary Magazine* 8 (2018): <https://www.helenlitmag.com/flash-when-word-came.html>
- “Killed On The Ground,” Kestrel 38 (2017): 28
- “Observed,” *Iron Horse Literary Review*—Photo Finish Anthology (2017): [https://issuu.com/ironhorsereview/docs/photofinish\\_2017\\_final\\_interior](https://issuu.com/ironhorsereview/docs/photofinish_2017_final_interior)
- “What He Saw” and “When the Moon Was New” *Cleaver* 16 (2016): <https://www.cleavermagazine.com/what-he-saw-and-when-the-moon-was-new-by-karl-plank/>

#### Miscellaneous

- "Teaching When the Air Smells Like Smoke," *Davidson Journal* 30 (2001): 4-7.
- "Focus of 'Schindler's List' too Christian," Charlotte Observer, 28 February 1994.

### **3. Papers and Public Lectures**

#### Collegiate and Professional Societies

- "Lou Silberman's 'The Theologian's Task': An Episode in American Jewish Theology," a paper presented to the AAR-SE; Greensboro, NC; March 15, 2009.
- "Why Dead Men Don't Praise God: A Post-Holocaust Reckoning in the Poetry of Glatshetyn, Osherow, and Celan," a paper presented to the AAR-SE; Atlanta, GA; March 9, 2008.
- "Breakthrough of the Word: Thomas Merton and Martin Buber on Reading the Bible," a paper presented to the conference on Thomas Merton and Judaism; The Thomas Merton Foundation, Louisville KY; February 17, 2002
- "*Bat Qol*: The Intertextuality of Biblical Psalms and Modern Poetry," a paper presented to the Society of Biblical Literature (national); Nashville, TN; November 18, 2000.
- "By the Waters of a Death Camp: Psalm 137 and Holocaust Intertextuality," a paper presented to the Society of Biblical Literature (national); Boston, MA; November 22, 1999.
- "'I Have Inscribed You on the Palms of my Hands': Imagination and Novelty in Isaiah of the Exile," a paper presented to the Society of Biblical Literature (national); San Francisco, CA; November 24, 1997.
- "Ascent to Darker Hills: Psalm 121 and its Poetic Revision," a paper presented to the Society of Biblical Literature (national); New Orleans, LA; November 25, 1996.
- "Leaves from a Newer Testament: The Ghetto Scripture of Simkhe Bunhem Shayevitsh," a paper presented to the American Academy of Religion (national); Washington, DC; November 20-23, 1993.
- "The Mother of the Wire Fence: A Photograph from the Lodz Ghetto, a paper presented to the American Academy of Religion-SE; Charleston, SC; March 19-21, 1993.

- "Scrawls of Scripture: Intertextuality in the Hebrew Poetry of Dan Pagis," a paper presented to the Society of Biblical Literature (national); San Francisco, California; November 21-24, 1992.
- "Scripture in a Sealed Railway Car: The Holocaust Poems of Dan Pagis," a paper presented to the American Academy of Religion-SE; Atlanta, Georgia; March 13-15, 1992.
- "Hagar and the Return to Dialogue. A Response to Delores Williams," Society of Biblical Literature (national); Kansas City; November 25, 1991.
- "The Eclipse of Jewish Difference: A Reappraisal of the Merton and Heschel Exchange," a paper presented to the International Thomas Merton Society; Rochester, New York; June 13-16, 1991; and as the spring lecture of the Institute for Jewish and Christian Studies, Siena College, Loudonville, New York, April 26, 1992.
- "Unbroken Trains: Reflections on Michael Martin's Approaching History," a paper presented to the American Academy of Religion SE; Atlanta, Georgia; March 17, 1991.
- "A Comment on Richard B. Hays' Echoes of Scripture in Paul," a paper presented at the Society of Biblical Literature meeting (national); New Orleans, Louisiana; November 17, 1990.
- "Thomas Merton and Hannah Arendt: The Vita Contemplativa after Eichmann," a paper presented to The International Thomas Merton Society; Louisville, Kentucky; May 25-28, 1989.
- "The Survivor's Return: Reflections on Memory and Place," a paper presented at the Scholars' Conference of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, the Anne Frank Institute of Philadelphia, and the International Bonhoeffer Society; Washington, D.C., March 6-8, 1988.
- "Chaim Potok: Jewish Author, Human Witness," a lecture given to the Davidson College Alumni Association on the occasion of Chaim Potok's Reynolds Lectures; March 26, 1986.
- "Raging Wisdom: Literature on the Horizon of Suicide," public lecture and colloquium given at Radford University, Radford VA; 11 February 1986.
- "Between Protest and Proclamation: A Paradoxical Paul in an Unredeemed World," SBL (national); Chicago, IL, December 1984.
- "An Ironic Paul: Dissimulation and Paradox in I Cor. 4:9-13," SBL-SE; Williamsburg, VA, March 1984.

- "Resurrection Theology: The Corinthian Controversy Reexamined," SBL-SE; Louisville, KY, March 1980 (student essay prize).

#### Occasional Papers and Lectures

- "From Sholem Aleichem to *Fiddler on the Roof*: The Tevye Tradition," public lecture, Davidson College, Davidson NC; March 19, 2015.
- "Religion and Law: Three Cases," 3-lecture series, First Presbyterian Church, Charlotte NC, October 2012; Davidson College Presbyterian Church, Davidson NC, March 2014.
- "Legal Authority and Verbal Harm in a Talmudic Narrative," Discover Davidson Lecture, Davidson College, October 16, 2011.
- "Psalms and the Self," 4-lecture series, The Academy at Myers Park Presbyterian Church, Charlotte NC, September-October, 2010.
- "Inscape: Four Religious Poets and their Visions of Faith," 5-lecture series, The Academy at Myers Park Presbyterian Church, Charlotte NC, October-November, 2009; Davidson College Presbyterian Church, Davidson, NC, January 2011.
- "Redemption as Mending Repair: *Tikkun* in the Art of Samuel Bak," Myers Park Baptist Church, Charlotte NC, March 18, 2009.
- "Aspects of Classical Judaism," 4-lecture series, The Academy at Myers Park Presbyterian Church, Charlotte NC, October 2008; Davidson College Presbyterian Church, Davidson NC, January 2009.
- "How Does God Love? Rowan Williams and the Challenge of the Contemporary Church," 5-lecture series, The Academy at Myers Park Presbyterian Church, Charlotte NC, February-March 2008.
- "*Imma* Ruth: An Immigrant's Story," 4-lecture series, The Academy at Myers Park Presbyterian Church, Charlotte NC, September-October 2007.
- "'Praying among other Pray-ers': Christian Encounters with Muslim Spirituality," 4 lecture series, Davidson College Presbyterian Church, Davidson NC, October – November 2006; St. Patrick's Episcopal Mission, Mooresville NC, January 2007; The Academy at Myers Park Presbyterian Church, Charlotte NC, January – February 2007.

- “Charles de Foucauld and the Saharan Tuareg: A Christian-Muslim Encounter,” Learning in Retirement Lecture Series, The Pines at Davidson, November 7, 2005
- “*Tikkun Olam* and the Challenge of Community,” Lilly Alumni Retreat; June 4, 2005
- “The Spirituality of Thomas Merton,” St. Patrick’s Episcopal Mission, Mooresville, NC; April 12, 2005
- “The Last Testament of Christian de Chergé, OCSO,” Learning in Retirement Lecture Series, The Pines; November 29, 2004; and First Presbyterian Church, Charlotte NC, January 23, 2005; St. Patrick’s Episcopal Mission, Mooresville, NC, October 26, 2005.
- “Rowan Williams and the Critique of War,” Davidson College Presbyterian Church; October 10, 2004.
- “Faith, Values and Monastic Discipline,” Lilly Program, Davidson College; September 8, 2004.
- “*Regula*: To Live What We Value”; Lilly Program Sophomore Retreat; August 19, 2004.
- “The Transformation of Mor(t)al Vision: Rowan Williams and the Challenge of Difference,” 4-lecture series, St. Alban’s Episcopal Church, Davidson, North Carolina; March 2004.
- “The Shifting Context of Church-Related Higher Education,” Davidson College Board of Trustees, Charlotte, NC; February 5, 2004.
- “‘The Body’s Grace’: Rowan Williams on Sexuality and the Current Anglican Crisis,” St. Patrick’s Episcopal Church, Mooresville, NC; February 3, 2004; also, Alumni Reunion Lecture, Davidson College, April 23, 2004.
- “The Radical Orthodoxy of Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury,” The Pines, Davidson, North Carolina; November 17, 2003.
- “Work and Unceasing Prayer: Some Monastic Views,” Lilly Alumni Summer Seminar on “Faith, Life and Work: Vocation in the Contemporary World,” Davidson College, Davidson, NC; June 19-22, 2003
- “The Legacy of the Rule of Benedict,” The Pines, Davidson, NC; March 31, 2003

- "Praying With One's Feet: Abraham Heschel, Martin Luther King, and the Pursuit of Civil Rights," Martin Luther King Day Lecture; Davidson College, Davidson, NC; January 14, 2002
- "Dismay and Consolation in the Hebrew Bible," the 1996 Gilchrist Lectures, a three-lecture series given to Trinity Presbyterian Church, Charlotte NC, March-April, 1996.
- "Reynolds Price and the Struggle of 'People in Rooms,'" a lecture given to the Philanthropic Literary Society, Davidson College, Davidson NC; February 5, 1995.
- "Contemplative Ethics and Religious Pluralism: The Merton Legacy," a series of four lectures given the Institute for Theology, Siena College, Loudonville, NY; July 26-28, 1993.
- "Erasing the Mark of Cain: The Challenge of Abraham Joshua Heschel," a three-lecture series given to Trinity Presbyterian Church of Charlotte, NC, April 8-10, 1990.
- "Religious Dimensions of Southern Literature," a five-lecture series given to the Davidson College Elderhostel Program, July, 1989.
- "Thomas Merton and the Ethics of Contemplation," Fall Lecture Series, Anderson School of Theology, Anderson SC, October 9-10, 1988.
- "The Ethical Edge of Contemplation: Thomas Merton and the Christian Life," a three-lecture series given to Trinity Presbyterian Church of Charlotte NC at Montreat NC, October 16-18, 1987; to the First Presbyterian Church of Statesville NC, November 1-3, 1987; and to the Davidson College Elderhostel Program, July, 1988.
- "Broken Continuities: Night and the Cross of Jesus," a lecture given to Trinity Presbyterian Church of Charlotte NC, March 29, 1987; and to St. Paul's Episcopal Church of Winston-Salem NC, November 8, 1987.
- "Paul and Human Liberation" (with R. David Kaylor); the Fetzer Lectures for First Presbyterian Church of Concord NC, February 16-17, 1986.
- "'Slouching Toward Bethlehem': Mythologies of Beginning and the Birth Narratives of Jesus," Episcopal Church of the Holy Comforter, Charlotte NC, December 5, 12, and 19, 1984.

#### **4. Davidson College**

Department of Religion

J. W. Cannon Professor, 1996-2023  
 Department Chair 1996-2006  
 Professor, 1995-2023  
 Associate Professor, 1988-95  
 Acting Department Chair, Fall 1992  
 Assistant Professor, 1983-88  
 Instructor, 1982-83

### Courses Taught

Religion and the Tragic Vision  
 Introduction to the Hebrew Bible  
 Introduction to the New Testament  
 Paul and the Human Situation  
 Parables of the Jewish and Christian Traditions  
 The Art of Biblical Narrative  
 Tragedy and Comedy in Biblical Narrative  
 The Psalms and the Self  
 The Literature of Exile and Return  
 Wisdom Literature  
 Hebrew Narrative Literature  
 The Genesis Narrative  
 The Exodus Tradition  
 Jewish Religious Life  
 Modern Jewish Thought  
 Modern Jewish Literature  
 The Spiritual Imagination in Contemporary Poetry  
 Theologies of Religious Selfhood  
 Seminar: The Religious Universe of Elie Wiesel (Spring 1984)  
 Seminar: Kierkegaard, Buber, and Merton: Explorations of Religious Selfhood (Spring 1986)  
 Seminar: Monastic Spirituality (Spring 1988)  
 Seminar: Holocaust Narrative and Film (Fall 1989)  
 Seminar: Matthew (Fall 1990)  
 Seminar: The Thought of Hannah Arendt (Fall 1991)  
 Seminar: The Holocaust and the Construction of Memory (Fall 1992)  
 Seminar: The Holocaust and the Bible (Spring 1994)  
 Seminar: Dismay and Consolation in the Hebrew Bible (Spring 1997)  
 Seminar: Job and his Legacy (Fall 2000)  
 Seminar: The Exodus Narrative (Fall 2002)  
 Seminar: Thomas Merton and Monastic Spirituality (Fall 2003)  
 Seminar: The Desire for God: Studies in Monastic Spirituality (Fall 2005)  
 Seminar: The Poetry of Praise and Pain: Israel's Psalms (Fall 2007, Fall 2010)  
 Seminar: Religion and Law in Jewish Tradition and American Jurisprudence (Fall

2012, Spring 2014)  
 Seminar: The Spiritual Imagination in Contemporary Poetry (Spring 2016)  
 Seminar: Infinite Gesture: The Theology of David Foster Wallace (Spring 2019)  
 Seminar: Wilderness and Bewilderment (Fall 2022)

### Committees

Vice Chair of the Faculty (2000-2003)  
 Admissions Committee (2010- 2013)  
 Faculty Tenure Committee (1997-99; chair, 1998-99)  
 Professional Affairs Committee (1992-95; chair, 1994)  
 Executive Committee (1991-92; 2000-2003; 2013-2016)  
 Honorary Degree Committee (2000-2009; chair, 2007- 2009)  
 Library Committee (1988-1991)  
 Educational Policy Committee (1987-1990; 1996-99; 2017-)  
 Campus and Religious Life (1984-87)  
 Pre-Medical Committee (1983-86)  
 Pre-Ministerial Committee (1982-88)  
 Lilly Advisory Board (1999- )  
 Self-Study: Institutional Planning Committee (1984-85)  
 Self Study: Core Requirements (2005-2006)

### Honors Thesis Direction

- Dahlia Krutkovich, Center for Interdisciplinary Studies (May 2021)
- Sara Jane Bush, "George MacDonald's Theology of the Imagination," (May 2016)
- Mitchell Moreau, "Whispers from the Wilderness: Tracing the Promise of Progeny and Land" (May 2014)
- Kaitlyn Curran, "Reading Between the Lines: Uncovering Protestant Prejudice in Nineteenth-Century Studies of Religion" (May 2012)
- Brianna Deutsch, "From Fatal Flaws to Female Subversion: Pharaoh in the Bible and the Qur'an," (May 2011)
- Carolyn S. Klaasen, "Reading Both Sides of the Gate: Scholarly and Marginalized Exegesis," (May 2009)
- Anna P. Drake, "Sex, God, and the Language of Love: Theological Dimensions of the Song of Songs," (May 2008)

- Trey Skinner, "Becoming Through Paradox: Thomas Merton's Spiritual and Vocational Development," (May 2007)
- Katherine L. Sorrell, "It Weighs in the Balance: A Personal Journey into a Family Narrative" (Center for Interdisciplinary Studies; May 2006)
- Christie Kilby, "The Poetics of Praise: Eastern Orthodox Aesthetics in the Writings of Rainer Maria Rilke and Thomas Merton" (May 2006)
- Cammy Crane, "*Tolla Mulier in Utero*: Tamar in Genesis 38 Revisited through the Modern Lens of Esther in *The Bell Jar* and Sylvia Plath's Bee Poems" (May 2006)
- Elizabeth Grace Campbell, "Through the Eyes of Kathleen Norris and Annie Dillard" (May 2005)
- Richard Vinson, "They Sat in Judgment: Nashville as Test Case for Blumenthal's Theory of Hierarchy and Peer Authority" (May 2002)
- Cameron Richardson, "Transforming Theology: Feminism and Liberation in the Work of Dorothee Sölle" (May 2001)
- Liz Clasen, "Back to the Beginning: Creation through the Eyes of Homelessness" (May 2000)
- David Jackson, "The Jacob Cycle: Sibling Rivalry in Genesis" (May 1998)
- Amy D. Cohan, "Modern Midrash and the Akedah: Aharon Appelfeld's *The Age of Wonders* and Chaim Potok's *My Name is Asher Lev*" (May 1994)
- Cyndi Hess, "Franz Kafka: The Search for Transcendence, Truth, and Tradition" (May 1994)
- Anne K. Zirkle, "Moses Mendelssohn: Tradition, Modernity, and the Politics of *Bildung*" (May 1994)
- J. Kyle Kinner, "Survivor/Artists and the Poetics of Memory: Abraham Sutzkever and Paul Celan" (May 1993)
- Katherine J. Janiec, "Saying 'No' to Causality and 'Yes' to Restored Relation: The Banalization of Sexuality as Stumbling Block to Dialogue" (May 1990)
- Anne Catherine Blue, "The Emperor's Offer: A Study of Guilt in Literature and Theology" (May 1988)
- Barbara E. Blood, "Banality and the Holocaust" (May 1988)

- Michael Stephens, "'All Things to All People': Second Century Images of the Apostle Paul" (May 1987)
- Denise Gyauch, "The Corpus Christi Cycle: Medieval Play and Sacred Drama" (May 1986)

## **5. Selected Academic Honors**

Best of the Net Nomination, 2021

The Hunter Hamilton Teaching Award (Davidson College, 2009)

The Boswell Faculty Fellowship (Davidson College, 2008)

The Thomas Jefferson Award (Davidson College, 2002)

The Thomas Carter Prize for Non-Fiction Prose (*Shenandoah*, 1993)

The Founder's Medal (The Divinity School, Vanderbilt University, 1977)

General Honor: Atherton High School Hall of Fame, Louisville, KY (2005)

Alumni Achievement Award, Hanover College (2025)

## **6. Professional Membership**

- American Academy of Religion
- Society of Biblical Literature
- Council for Liberal Arts Departments of Religion
- International Thomas Merton Society

## **7. Consultant Relationship**

Colgate University

Colby College

Georgetown University

Hanover College

Transylvania University

Rhodes College

Presbyterian College

Elon University

University of the South

Fortress Press

Abingdon Press  
 Indiana Committee for the Humanities  
 Scholars Press

## **8. Ecclesial Relationships**

Associate of the Order of the Holy Cross  
 Lay Reader, Protestant Episcopal Church  
 Cantor, Episcopal Church of the Holy Comforter, Charlotte NC (1983-1994)  
 Substitute Organist, Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina

### Musical Compositions Performed (Anthems and Hymns)

St. Alban's Episcopal Church, Davidson NC

Christ Church (Episcopal), Oberlin OH  
 Davidson College Presbyterian Church, Davidson NC  
 Episcopal Church of the Holy Comforter, Charlotte NC  
 All Saints Episcopal Church, Concord NC  
 Kenilworth Presbyterian Church, Asheville NC  
 Strathmoor Presbyterian Church, Louisville KY  
 Trinity Presbyterian Church, Nashville TN

## **9. Personal**

Born: Raleigh, NC (b. 1951)

Parents: Charles A. Plank and Joyce Clayton Plank

Married: Kathleen Blackwell-Plank

Child: [Hannah Kayley Plank](#) (b. 1994)