

Jason A. Mahn, Ph.D.

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EDUCATION

Ph.D.	2004	Emory University, Atlanta, GA Religion / Theological Studies
M.A.	1998	Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, MN Theology and Doctrine
B.A.	1995	Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, MN Religion and English, with emphasis in writing

CURRENT AND PREVIOUS POSITIONS

Professor of Religion, Augustana College (assoc. 2011-2019; assist. professor 2007-11)

Tenure granted 2011. Promotion to full professor in 2019.

Professional Development Program Officer, NetVUE (the Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education) (part-time, beginning July 2026)

I organize and convene the [annual pre-AAR NetVUE gathering](#), co-lead the [Theology/Religion/Vocation summer disciplinary seminar](#), and coordinate other disciplinary seminars.

Founding Director, Presidential Center for Faith and Learning at Augustana College (2017-December 2026)

The Center lifts up Augustana's commitments to interfaith engagement, social justice, spiritual exploration, the reasoned examination of faith, and vocational discernment as a way of sustaining and cherishing the college's relationship with the church.

Editor, *Intersections: Faith, Learning and the Vocation of Lutheran Higher Education* (2012-2022)

Intersections is a journal publication by and largely for the 26 academic communities within the Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities (NECU); it sustains reflection on the intersection of faith, learning, and teaching within Lutheran higher education.

Advisor, Pre-Seminary Program, Augustana College (2012-present)

Mentor and advise students through seminary exploration and preparation; communicate with local churches and Lutheran and other seminaries; co-teach with our campus chaplain a pre-seminary exploration course, “Working with Faith,” each Spring.

Mellon Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow, Duke University (2004-2007)

Taught undergraduate religion and writing courses on thematic topics. Received the Duke University Award for Excellence in Teaching Writing (university-wide award; sole recipient for 2007).

Instructor of Religion, Emory University and Candler School of Theology (2002-2004)

Through the Dean’s Teaching Fellowship, instructed two undergraduate courses and one master’s level course; served as various teaching assistants and associates.

AUTHORSHIP

BOOKS

- (1) *Neighbor Love through Fearful Days: Finding Purpose and Meaning in a Time of Crisis*. Fortress Press, 2021. [author]

In this, my most popular/non-scholarly book, I reflect on the Covid-19 pandemic, economic and ecological collapse, and the pandemic of white supremacy—as well as on the calling to serve my and work toward the common good, even and especially in times of crisis. I here grapple with “perennial questions about purpose, faith, and vocation as they take on a newfound urgency as cities lock down, economies reopen and close again, and our fractured country teeters on the edge of civil war. Each entry grapples with the anxieties and opportunities, the suffering and sense of being summoned, that characterize that same period.” (from blurb from Fortress Press)

- (2) *Becoming a Christian in Christendom: Radical Discipleship and the Way of the Cross in America’s “Christian” Culture*. Fortress Press, 2016. [author]

The book combines Christian thought with sociological perspectives and new ethnographic research to inquire into the problems of Christian identity in an ostensibly Christian culture. I argue that contemporary “secular” culture remains an instance of “Christendom”—indeed, is Christendom’s mirror opposite—and so continues to raise problems for “becoming a Christian in Christendom.” The project brings together Lutheran theologians of the cross with communitarians influenced by the Radical Reformation in order to critique acculturation and accommodation in American Christianity.

- (3) *Fortunate Fallibility: Kierkegaard and the Power of Sin*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. [author]

The book is a constructive retrieval of Kierkegaard’s later religious writings (1840’s-50’s), specifically, of his notion that the capacity or disposition to sin provides an essential component of Christian faith, and thus can be considered “fortunate” or “happy.” The project uses the “*felix culpa*” motif of the 5th century Holy Saturday liturgy, of Byron and other romantics, of 19th century German Idealist philosophy, and of the Lutheran tradition in order to trace Kierkegaard’s strangely positive construal of sin, temptation, and *Anfechtung* in relation to Christian faith.

- (4) *So that All May Flourish: The Aims of Lutheran Higher Education*. Fortress Press, 2023. [co-editor with Marcia Bunge and Martha Stortz; author of introduction and chapter 5: “Educating Whole Persons for Wholeness.”]

The book cultivates knowledge of Lutheran Higher Education that is appreciative, critical, and constructive. The book includes 16 chapters across three organizing sections: Core Commitments, Distinctive Strengths, and Contemporary Callings.

- (5) *Radical Lutherans/Lutheran Radicals*. Cascade Press, 2017. [editor; author of Introduction and Chapter 5]

The book includes chapters on Luther, Kierkegaard, Bonhoeffer, Soelle, and “You” (a final chapter authored by me that addressed the vocation of the student/reader). Each chapter shows how the figure returns to the roots (hence “radical”) of Luther's life and writing and puts them toward radical politics, preferential option for the poor and suffering, and commitments to justice.

- (6) *The Vocation of Lutheran Higher Education* (Lutheran University Press, 2016) [editor; author of Introduction and an additional chapter]

This edited anthology collects the most influential essays published in the journal *Intersections* from 1996 to 2016 to support reflections on the intersection of the Lutheran faith, pedagogy, vocational reflection, and the institutional identities of ELCA colleges and universities.

RECENT ARTICLES, BOOK CHAPTERS & SHORTER WORKS

- “Gifted and Re-Gifting: Civic Participation, Ecological Membership, and Vocational Reflection for the ‘Real World.’” *Studies in Vocation and Calling* 1, no. 2 (2026), forthcoming September 2026.
- “The Value(s) of Lutheran Liberal Arts in a Neoliberal Age.” In *Called to Reckon: Re-placing History and Reclaiming Mission at a Midwestern College*, ed. Jane Simonsen. Southern Illinois University Press, 2025
- “Learning to See the Planet as Gift.” *The Christian Century*. Feb., 2025. Online version: <https://www.christiancentury.org/features/learning-see-planet-gift>
- “On Becoming a Humus Being: Looking at Birds and Rereading Kierkegaard in the Anthropocene.” In *Kierkegaard and the Poetry of the Gospel: Essays on the Lily Discourses*, ed. Rick Furtak and Frances Maugan-Brown., Bloomsbury Academic, 2025.
- “The Bible and the Pandemic.” *The Christian Century*, October 21, 2020. Online version: <https://www.christiancentury.org/review/books/n-t-wright-and-walter-brueggemann-look-bible-wisdom-during-pandemic>
- “At War with a Virus?” *The Christian Century*, May 6, 2020. Online version: <https://www.christiancentury.org/article/critical-essay/are-we-really-war-coronavirus>
- “The Cheap Grace of White Privilege and the Costly Grace of Repentant Antiracism.” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 43.7 (June 2020) <http://www.currentsjournal.org/index.php/currents/article/view/254/282>

- “Faith Formation in my World Religion Classroom” *The Christian Century*. Feb. 12, 2020. On line version: <https://www.christiancentury.org/article/first-person/faith-formation-my-world-religions-classroom>
- “Still Loving What We Cannot Save,” *Living Lutheran*, February 21, 2021. (Online version found here: <https://www.livinglutheran.org/voices-of-faith/still-loving-what-we-cannot-save/>)
- Various blog posts for NetVUE’s Vocation Matters. Please see complete list [here](#).

GRANTS AWARDED, AFFILIATIONS & ECCLESIAL WORK

June, 2026	Invited participant in the Collegeville Institute’s writing workshop, Publishing for the Public, led by Katelyn Beaty.
2024	Lead author of a \$105,000 NetVUE Vocation Across the Disciplines Grant to bring career preparation of Business Administration students together with liberal learning and deep vocational reflection. Grant awarded in full.
2020	Co-author of a \$40,000 NetVUE Institutional Saga Grant to reframe and re-narrate “the Augustana Story” with attention to nineteenth century colonial settlements, race relations at a predominantly white institution, past and present immigration, and the College’s Lutheran heritage and contemporary commitments. Grant awarded in full.
2020	Co-Chair of hiring committee for Augustana College’s Campus Chaplain
2018	Lead author in a \$50,000 NetVUE Program Development Grant to infuse vocational reflection into the curriculum through “Reasoned Examination of Faith” courses and high-impact immersive learning and to integrate with co-curricular student opportunities. Grant awarded in full.
2012	Waitlisted/selected as alternate for a Sabbatical Grant for Researchers, Louisville Institute. Project Title: “Becoming a Christian in Christendom.”
2008-present	Frequent adult education instruction and guest preaching at local congregations and spiritual retreat venues (Spirit in the Desert, Holden Village). Topics include interfaith relations, atonement theories, white privilege as cheap grace, Radical Lutherans, redemption and restorative justice, etc. For a preaching example, and one that deals with themes related to giftedness and grace, see the 2024 “Joy of Christmas” service at Augustana Lutheran Church, Andover, IL (34:45 mark).
1999-present	Member: American Academy of Religion, Søren Kierkegaard Society of North America, Society of Lutheran and Anglican Theologians
1995-present	Member and lay leader of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (various congregations/synods). Current membership is with St. Paul Lutheran Church in Davenport, Iowa, where I frequently lead adult education sessions and currently serve on an associate pastor call committee.