

# PAUL EMORY PUTZ

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George W. Truett Theological Seminary  
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## EDUCATION

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- 2018 Ph.D. Degree in History, *Baylor University***  
Dissertation: “God, Country, and Big-Time Sports: American Protestants and the Creation of ‘Sportianity,’ 1920-1980.”  
Comprehensive exams: Post-1877 American history (major field), American religious history (major field), and modern Middle East (minor field).
- 2012 M.A. Degree in History, *University of Nebraska-Omaha***
- 2009 B.S. Degree in Secondary Education (history endorsement), *Grace University***

## POSITIONS HELD

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- 2022-**      **Assistant Director of the Faith & Sports Institute / Program Director of the Master of Arts in Theology and Sports Studies, *Baylor University’s Truett Theological Seminary***  
*Main responsibilities:* Leading and developing an online graduate degree program in theology and sports studies; providing strategic direction and support for the Faith & Sports Institute’s other online and public-facing programs and initiatives; engaging in research, writing, and speaking on sports and Christianity.
- 2019-22**      **Assistant Director of the Faith & Sports Institute, *Baylor University’s Truett Theological Seminary***  
*Main responsibilities:* Leading and developing an online continuing education program focused on sports, theology, and culture; providing strategic direction for the Faith & Sports Institute’s public-facing programs and initiatives; engaging in research, writing, and speaking on sports and Christianity.
- 2018-19**      **Lecturer in History, *Messiah College***  
*Courses taught:* The Meaning of Sports in American Life • United States History Survey Since 1865 • Sports, Race, and Politics in American History • Created and Called for Community

- 2013-18**      **Graduate and Teaching Assistant, *Baylor University History Department***
- 2010-13**      **Social Studies Teacher, *Millard North High School (Omaha, NE)***

## **PUBLICATIONS**

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### **In Progress**

*The Spirit of the Game: Christian Athletes, Big-Time Sports, and the Transformation of American Protestantism* (book manuscript under contract with Oxford University Press)

“Touchdown Jesus: The Midwest and the Integration of Religion and Sport.” Chapter under contract in *Oxford History of the Midwest*, edited by Jon Lauck (Oxford University Press).

“Fundamentalism and Sport.” Chapter under contract in *The Oxford Handbook of Christian Fundamentalism*, edited by Andrew Atherstone and David Ceri Jones (Oxford University Press).

### **Book Chapters**

“‘There is Talk of Black Power’: Christian Athletes and the Revolt of the Black Athlete,” in *Religion and Sports in North America: Critical Essays for the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Jeffrey Scholes and Randall Balmer (New York: Routledge, 2022), 13-34.

“The Homer of Middle-Western America: The Syndicated Poetry of Walt Mason,” in *The Midwestern Moment: The Ascendance of Midwestern Regionalism, 1880-1940*, edited by Jon Lauck (Hastings, NE: Hastings College Press, 2017), 113-128.

### **Peer-Reviewed Publications**

“Tracing the Historical Contours of Black Muscular Christianity and American Sport,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 39.4 (2022): 404-424.

“For Race and Region: A Brief History of the Western Negro Press Association, 1896-1920,” *Great Plains Quarterly* 38.2 (Spring 2018): 175-198.

“Commercializing the Sacred Office: Sexual Revolution and the Scandal of the Modern Marrying Parson, 1895-1930,” *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 17.1 (January 2018): 56-76.

“Building A City on a Hill: Evangelical Protestant Men and Moral Reform under the Des Moines Plan, 1907-1916,” *The Annals of Iowa* 77.1 (Winter 2018): 1-40.

“Big-League Basketball Comes to Omaha: A History of the Omahawks,” *Nebraska History* 97.8 (Winter 2016): 185-198.

“From the Pulpit to the Press: Frank Crane’s Omaha, 1892-1896,” *Nebraska History* 96.3 (Fall 2015): 136-153.

“A Church for the People and a Priest for the Common Man: Charles W. Savidge, Omaha’s Eccentric Reformer,” *Nebraska History* 94.2 (Summer 2013): 54-73.

“Jesse ‘Cab’ Renick: In Search of an Indian Identity,” *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 89.1 (Spring 2011): 72-97.

### Book Reviews (Academic Journals)

Randall Balmer, *Passion Plays: How Religion Shaped Sports in North America* (University of North Carolina Press, 2022). Review for the *Journal of Sport History* (forthcoming).

Steve Marantz, *Citizen Akoy: Basketball and the Making of a South Sudanese American* (University of Nebraska Press, 2019). Reviewed for *Nebraska History* 100.4 (Winter 2019): 252-253.

Michael Hurd, *Thursday Night Lights: The Story of Black High School Football in Texas* (University of Texas Press, 2017). Reviewed for *Great Plains Quarterly* 38.4 (Fall 2018): 440-441.

Timothy B. Neary, *Crossing Parish Boundaries: Race, Sports, and Catholic Youth in Chicago, 1914-1954* (University of Chicago Press, 2016). Reviewed for *Journal of American Ethnic History* 37.3 (Spring 2018): 134-136.

Murry Nelson, *Big Ten Basketball, 1943-1972* (McFarland, 2017). Reviewed for *Journal of Sport History* 45.1 (Spring 2018): 121-122.

Willa Cather with an introduction from Susan Schiller, *Alexander’s Bridge* (Hastings College Press, 2016). Reviewed for *Middle West Review* 4.2 (Spring 2018): 90-92.

Christopher D. Cantwell, Heath W. Carter, and Janine Giordano Drake, eds., *The Pew and the Picket Line: Christianity and the American Working Class* (University of Illinois Press, 2016). Reviewed for *Annals of Iowa* 76.1 (Winter 2017): 145-146.

Brent M.S. Campney, *This Is Not Dixie: Racist Violence in Kansas, 1861-1927* (University of Illinois Press, 2015). Reviewed for *Great Plains Quarterly* 37.1 (Winter 2017): 66-67.

David N. Wetzel, *Vanishing Messiah: The Life and Resurrections of Francis Schlatter* (University of Iowa Press). Reviewed for *Nebraska History* 97.8 (Winter 2016): 218-219.

William A. Mirola, *Redeeming Time: Protestantism and Chicago's Eight-Hour Movement, 1866-1912* (University of Illinois Press, 2015). Reviewed for *Fides et Historia* 47.2 (Summer/Fall 2015): 201-203.

Tekla Agbala Ali Johnson, *Free Radical: Ernest Chambers, Black Power, and the Politics of Race* (Texas Tech University Press, 2012). Reviewed for *Middle West Review* 2.1 (Fall 2015): 107-109.

### Online and General Interest Publications

I have published over twenty articles on themes related to history, Christianity, and sports for publications including *Christianity Today*, *Slate*, *Religion News Service*, and *Religion & Politics*. A list of those publications with links is available at [paulemoryputz.com](http://paulemoryputz.com).

### GRANTS/FELLOWSHIPS/AWARDS

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#### Fellowships/Grants for Research

2016	Research Fellowship, Presbyterian Historical Society
2016	Evangelism Research Grant, Billy Graham Center Archives
2016	University of Chicago Robert L. Platzman Memorial Fellowship
2015-16	Wayne Travel Grant, Kenneth Spencer Research Library at the University of Kansas
2015-16	State Historical Society of Iowa Research Grant
2012-13	Nebraska State Historical Society Research Grant

#### Other Fellowships/Awards

2013-18	Graduate School Fellowship, Baylor University, 2013-2018
2013-14	Guittard Fellowship, Baylor University, 2013-2014
2012-13	Bernie Kolasa Academic Memorial Scholarship, Nebraska-Omaha AAUP
2011-12	Outstanding History Graduate Student, University of Nebraska-Omaha

### ACADEMIC PAPERS AND INVITED TALKS

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#### 2023

“The Dallas Mavericks’ Evangelical Experiment and the Shape of Religion in the NBA.” Academic paper presented at the annual meeting of the North American Society for Sport History. May 2023.

“Jesus and James Naismith: The Christian History of Basketball and its Lessons for the Church Today.” Truett Seminary Sports Ministry Chapel. March 2023

**2022**

“Jackie Robinson and the American Way.” Invited lecture for an American history class at Baylor University. November 2022.

“Sports and Religion in American History.” Invited lectured for an American history class at Baylor University. September 2022.

“Muscular Christianity and the Making of Tim Tebow.” Invited lecture delivered virtually for a class on sports and Christianity at Vanderbilt University. March 2022.

**2020**

“Sports, Race, and the American ‘Middlebrow’ Project in the Twentieth Century.” Paper presented at the U.S. Society for Intellectual History’s virtual conference. November 2020.

“Bringing Christianity into the Conversation on Sports and Race in American History.” Invited lecture delivered virtually for a class on American history at Sattler College. April 2020.

“Sunday’s Competition: Christian Ministry in a Sports-Obsessed World.” Lecture delivered for the Baylor Department of Religion’s Ministry Guidance Conference. Waco, TX. March 2020.

“Mission-Driven Institutions with a New Mission: How Religiously Affiliated Universities are Using Athletics to Survive.” Paper presented with Jordan Bass and Claire Zvosek at the Applied Sport Management Association conference. Waco, TX. February 2020.

“White Allies and Black Athletes in College Sports.” Paper presented with Matthew White at the Black Student-Athlete Summit. Austin, TX. January 2020.

**2019**

“Christian Athletes and the Revolt of the Black Athlete.” Paper presented at the Second Global Congress on Sport and Christianity. Grand Rapids, Michigan. October 2019.

“God and the Gridiron Game: A Religious History of Football.” Invited lecture delivered at Ye Olde Sulphur Spa Historical Society. York, Pennsylvania. May 2019.

“Black Athletes in American Society: History for our #TakeAKnee Moment.” Invited lecture delivered at Saint Francis University. April 2019.

“The Rise of Sports Ministry.” Invited lecture delivered to a class on sports and religion at Bucknell University. March 2019.

“Black Athletes in White Society.” Invited lectured delivered to the Athletic Department at Messiah College. February 2019.

“God and the Gridiron Game: A Religious History of Football.” Invited lecture delivered at Mechanicsburg (PA) Presbyterian Church. February 2019.

Participant in the “Five Slides in Five Minutes” Session for Early Career Scholars. Annual meeting of the American Historical Association. Chicago, Illinois. January 2019.

## **2018**

“John Wooden, Jesus, and Me: Thinking Historically about the Intersection of Sports and Christianity.” Invited lecture delivered at Messiah College. November 2018.

“‘There is talk of Black Power...it is time somebody talked about God Power’: Evangelical Sports Ministries and the Black Athlete in the Long 1960s.” Presented at the winter meeting of the American Society of Church History. Washington, D.C. January 2018.

## **2017**

“Protestant, Catholic, Mormon: Forging a Broad Christian Alliance through Sport in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, 1954-1970.” Presented at the winter meeting of the American Society of Church History. Denver, Colorado. January 2017.

## **2016**

“Women and the Early Development of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, 1954-1976.” Presented at the Conference on Faith and History’s biennial meeting. Virginia Beach, Virginia. October 2016.

Roundtable on Ed Blum’s *Reforging the White Republic*. Presented at the Conference on Faith and History’s biennial meeting. Virginia Beach, Virginia. October 2016.

"The Possibilities, Perils, and Perimeters of Online Academic Communities: One Graduate Student's Perspective." Presented at Crossroads: The Future of Graduate History Education. Madison, New Jersey. March 2016.

“Whose Social Gospel? Contested Social Christianities in the Midwest.” Presented at the winter meeting of the American Society of Church History. Atlanta, Georgia. January 2016.

## **2015**

“‘A wondrous compatibility of theological positions’: The Early Diversity of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, 1954-1970.” Presented at The Spirit of Sports: Baylor Symposium on Faith and Culture. Waco, Texas. November 2015.

“Reporting the Revival: Lena Mason’s Interracial Evangelistic Campaign in the Midwest, 1895-1905.” Presented at the annual spring meeting of the American Society of Church History. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 2015.

**2014**

“Christian Historians and Social Media.” Roundtable discussion at the Conference on Faith and History’s biennial meeting. Malibu, California. September 2014.

“‘Endless miseries, ruined lives, and social disaster’: Marrying Parsons and Sexual Revolution in the Progressive Era.” Presented at the Religion and Sexual Revolutions Conference at the John C. Danforth Center on Religion and Politics. St. Louis, Missouri. May 2014.

**MEDIA ENGAGEMENT**

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I am frequently interviewed on podcasts and for publications as a subject matter expert on sports, Christianity, and American history. The podcasts and publications include National Public Radio, the Associated Press, the *New York Times*, *The Ringer*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Deseret News*, *Religion News Service*, and *The Way of Improvement Leads Home*. For a list of media interviews and appearances with links provided, visit [paulemoryputz.com](http://paulemoryputz.com).

**PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

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American Historical Association | American Academy of Religion | American Society of Church History | North American Society for Sport History