

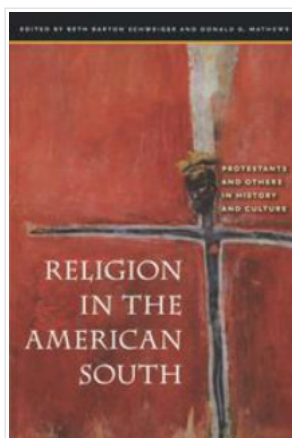
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## Pathfinder Religion and the American South

**Contact: Dwight Hunter**

**Email: [dhunte14@vols.utk.edu](mailto:dhunte14@vols.utk.edu)**



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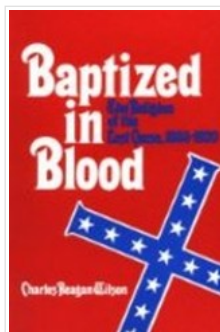
### Introduction

Religion and the American South seem as idyllic as apple pie and baseball. Some recent surveys have indicated that strong religious beliefs dominate the southern region of the United States, more so as a cohesive region than other regions of the United States. When the phrase “the Bible belt” is heard, many think of the South. While Christianity dominates this religious culture in the South, other religious beliefs have pockets of strength giving way to the assimilation of various cultures that is the South.

The encyclopedias and monographs listed in this pathfinder cover the assimilation of various beliefs. Even within Christianity there is, beyond the traditional Catholic and Protestant differences, a multitude of distinctly Southern religion. From snake handlers influenced by Appalachian living to African-Americans plight for dignity to the big-time televangelists to the Southern culture of partying hard on Saturday and going to church on Sunday, these types of cultural distinctions are a part of the social fabric that is religion in the South.

Many of the well-known writers of religion in the South are mentioned in this pathfinder. Resources written by well-known writers and researchers such as Sam Hill, Charles Reagan Wilson, Arthur Remillard, and Donald Mathews are listed here. These researchers and others have covered the unique experience that is Southern culture wrapped around by religious beliefs. Other sources besides printed books are journal titles, special collections, and free web resources. However, the most dominant type of resource would be monographic resources for this specialized topic.

This pathfinder's intent is to deliver some resources that helps discover religion and the American South.



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### Some Essential Terms

(Defined by the pathfinder author)

**American South** – geographically, the southeastern region of the United States formally defined by the Mason-Dixon line that separates northern and southern U.S. states in the eastern half of the country. Culturally, the American South is a part of the United States with a unique history of fervent religious beliefs combined with independent thoughts and actions that sometimes seem contrary to traditional religious beliefs.

**Religion** – A combined system of principles, values, and a reverence to God guiding societal corporate bodies as well as individuals in daily life and purpose.

**Civil religion** – the incorporation of religion into the cultural performances and political decision-making.

Christianity, Judaism, Islam – the three largest religions in the world are present in the South. While Christianity is the dominant religion in the American South in population and in library resources, Judaism has an influential impact on the American South. Surprisingly, it was the institution of slavery that brought Muslims and other followers of Islam to be a basic part of religion in the South.

#### Disclaimer:

This pathfinder is a guide to selected resources. Some of these resources may be restricted by academic institutions and not freely accessible for the general public. As a guide with selected resources, this pathfinder is not intended to be a complete listing of resources on religion in the American South. The definition-of-terms are from the pathfinder author.

Any book perused by the pathfinder author (noted by a call number) will have the annotation influenced by the source from the pathfinder author. Any printed books not available for perusal will be paraphrased and sourced from a book review citation.

**Finding Print Resources in Libraries: Library of Congress (LC) Call Numbers and Dewey Decimal System**

The LC call numbers in "B" contain many book sources to religion. Many of these monographs and reference books in this pathfinder came from either BR or BL specifically. Another source of books came from the LC call number "F", particularly, F 200 to 220. This history section in F 200s is where geographic references to other religion beliefs outside of Christianity in the South were discovered.

Here is a link to the complete breakdown of the Library of Congress call number in "B":

[http://www.loc.gov/aba/cataloging/classification/lcco/lcco\\_b.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/aba/cataloging/classification/lcco/lcco_b.pdf)

Some of the Library of Congress subject headings for religion and the American South are

- Southern States -- Church history.
- Protestant churches -- Southern States -- History.
- Southern States -- Religion
- Southern States -- Religious life and customs
- Slaves -- Religious life -- America -- History
- Christianity and culture -- Southern States
- Judaism -- Southern States -- History
- African Americans--Southern States--Religion

In the Dewey Decimal System, books on religion can be found in the 200 class.

## Print Encyclopedias

### Encyclopedia of religion in the South (BR 535 .E52)

Hill, S.S. & Lippy, C.H. ed. C.R. Wilson, consulting ed. (2005) *Encyclopedia of religion in the South*, 2nd ed., revised, updated, and expanded. Mercer University Press, Macon, Georgia.

A core collection need for anyone studying religion in the South. The entries for this encyclopedia cover many aspects of southern religion as well as Southern evangelists, Southern politicians and other denominations and religious faiths in the South.

Find this book near you ([World Cat link](#))

### New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture (F 209 .N47 v. 1)

Hill, S. S., & Wilson, C. R. (Eds.). (2006). *New encyclopedia of Southern culture*, Volume 1: Religion. Chapel Hill, NC, USA: University of North Carolina Press.

The 2006 edition has a volume about religion edited by Samuel Hill, editor for the *Encyclopedia of Religion in the South*. This volume is another core collection need for anyone studying religion in the South. Hill covers many aspects of Southern religion in this volume including Native American religion, significant Islam in the South coverage, Jewish religious life, Latino religion, Civil Rights and religion, Hinduism, as well as various Christian beliefs. Unlike the *Encyclopedia of Religion in the South*, volume one from the *New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* has an index and a list of contributing authors.

Find this book near you ([World Cat link](#))

## To Journals/Serials

### Journals/Serials

#### The Journal of Southern Religion (OAS) (Also listed in the free resource section)

Any study of religion in the South needs peer-reviewed articles from the journal title dedicated to covering all aspects of Southern religion. Not only is JSR a peer reviewed, open access journal, it receives collaborative support from four universities including the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. The board of JSR also awards a graduate student the *Hill Award* named after Southern religion scholar Samuel S. Hill. Hill is the editor of the *Encyclopedia of Religion in the South* and author of other Southern religion studies. JSR has peer-reviewed articles, archived issues, and also broadcasts a podcast channel. The podcast channel contains interviews of authors and students of religion in the American South. JSR is another core research need for studies about the religion in the South.

#### Southern Cultures

This peer-reviewed quarterly about Southern culture from the Center for the Study of the American South has a [religion subject section](#). Subscription access provided by UT-Knoxville library.

#### Southern Jewish History

Discover Jewish history in the American South through this journal title. Published by the Southern Jewish Historical Society, the first three volumes are freely accessible from the historical society's website. Check your local library for access to more recent volumes.

## Monographs

(Find any of these books in libraries near you through [WorldCat.org](http://WorldCat.org))

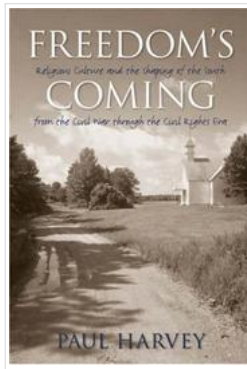
#### Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920

Wilson, C. R. (1980). *Baptized in blood: The religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.

Wilson's theme is that through religion, the South romanticized its cause amidst the end of the Civil War. This transformation gave strength to Southern righteousness.

Jeansone, G. (1980). Baptized in the Blood (Book Review). *Library Journal*, 105(18), 2205.

#### The Culture of Bible Belt Catholics



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Anderson, J. W. & Friend, W. eds. (1995). *The culture of Bible Belt Catholics*. New York: Paulist Press.

This seven-essay book is an ethnographic study of Catholicism in the South. As a comparative study, the study is based on listening observations.

McNally, M. J. (1997). The culture of Bible Belt Catholics (Book Review). *Church History*, 66(2), 424-425.

#### **Dixie Dharma: Inside a Buddhist temple in the American South (BQ739.U6)**

Wilson, J. (2012). *Dixie dharma: Inside a Buddhist temple in the American South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Wilson, in his well-received 2012 book, documents the regional differences of Buddhism in the last 30 years of the South. Unlike other Buddhist temples in America and around the World, there are five different Buddhist lineages practicing in the same religious house. This mixture would be unheard of elsewhere but to be Buddhist in the South requires pluralism.

#### **Freedom's Coming: Religious Culture and the Shaping of the South from the Civil War through the Civil Rights Era.**

(BR535 .H38)

Harvey, P. (2004). *Freedom's coming: Religious culture and the shaping of the South from the Civil War through the Civil Rights era*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Harvey, who dedicated this book to Sam Hill, puts down into words what many have wondered: race relations, religion, and the South. What is it? Where did it come from? How has the combination changed throughout the modern era? This is a very

compelling read and probably necessary to understand modern Southern religion.

#### **Religion in the American South: Protestants and others in history and culture (BR535 .R42)**

Schweiger, B. B., & Mathews, D. G. (2004). *Religion in the American South: Protestants and others in history and culture*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

This ten-essay book covers religious details often associated with Southern culture such as racism, lynching, prayer as a telephone, before the Bible Belt existed and more. Each essay is written by a different author. Each essay writer was allowed to write on whatever "religion in the South" meant.

#### **Religion in the Contemporary South: Changes, Continuities, and Contexts.**

Norman, C.E & Armentrout, D.S. eds. (2006) *Religion in the contemporary South: Changes, continuities, and contexts*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.

This fourteen-essay book paints a picture of the modern South and the incorporation of religion in the region's culture. The essays describe the types of pluralistic assimilation of religion in Southern culture.

Jacobe, M. F. (2007). Religion in the Contemporary South: Changes, Continuities, and Contexts by Corrie E. Norman and Don S. Armentrout, Editors. *Journal of American Culture*, 30(1), 131-132. doi:10.1111/j.1542-734X.2007.00491.x

#### **Religion in the Old South**

Mathews, D. G. (1977). *Religion in the Old South*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

This book studies Southern evangelicalism through a sociological prism. Religion in the South was a social religion not individual based.

Sweet, L. I. (1978). Religion in the Old South (Book Review). *Theological Studies*, 39(2), 354-356.

#### **Religion in the Southern States: A Historical Study (BR 535 .E44)**

Hill, S.S. ed. (1983). *Religion in the Southern states: A historical study*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press.

This book edited by Sam Hill, who also contributes a general essay about religion in the South, contains 16 essays about 16 states. All 16 essays are written by different authors, and each essay contains a bibliography. The arrangement of the essays is in alphabetical order of the 16 selected states.

#### **Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas (E443 .D56)**

Diouf, S. A. (1998). *Servants of Allah: African Muslims enslaved in the Americas*. New York: New York University Press.

Diouf researched the effect of the transatlantic slave trade which resulted in bringing in African Muslim beliefs into the South. The book describes shattered stereotypes when discoveries were made by American non-Muslims as to how long Islam had been established and that enslaved Africans communicated in Arabic. The Muslim heritage was assimilated into the American social fabric from the beginning of the American nation.

#### **Shalom Y'all: Images of Jewish Life in the American South (F 220 .J5 A76)**

Aron, B. & Fox, V. (2002). *Shalom y'all: Images of Jewish life in the American South*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill.

Interspersed with the photography of Bill Aron, Fox and Aron cover the small Southern Jewish communities that have, like many rural communities, seen an exodus of young people leaving for bigger cities and not returning home. This pictorial display is an attempt to preserve the historical journeys of Jews in the South where chopped liver is served with biscuits.

#### **Slave Religion: The "Invisible Religion" in the American South (BR 563 .N4 R25)**

Raboteau, A. J. (1978). *Slave religion: The "Invisible Religion" in the American South*. New York: Oxford University Press.

This 1978 classic research studied religion among American slaves in the South. Many of the slaves from Africa were followers of Mohammed's and some were even religious leaders. While many slaves converted to Christianity, their religious beliefs from Africa were often blended into the fabric of their invisible society.

#### **Southern Churches in Crisis Revisited (BR535 .H5)**

Hill, S. S. (1999). *Southern churches in crisis revisited*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

This reprint of the classic 1966 edition has a couple of essays added by Hill. The 1966 edition chastised the Southern churches for their failure to be in the forefront for civil rights. In this updated edition, Hill believes a crisis exists but from internal church orthodoxy rather than from current events.

#### **Southern Civil Religions: Imagining the Good Society in the Post-Reconstruction Era**

Remillard, A. (2011). *Southern civil religions: Imagining the good society in the post-Reconstruction era*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.

Remillard builds on the scholarship of C. R. Wilson's *Baptized in Blood*. While Wilson concentrated on white Protestant men incorporating religion into civil culture, Remillard expands the scholarship focus to a pluralism view of how various parts of Southern society had clashing cultural views.

Giggie, J. M. (2012). Arthur Remillard. Southern Civil Religions: Imagining the Good Society in the Post-Reconstruction Era. *American Historical Review*, 117(4), 1228-1229.

#### **Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt (BR535 .H47)**

Heyman, C. (1997). *Southern Cross: The beginnings of the Bible Belt*. New York: Oxford University Press.

In studying how evangelicalism became a part of the religious fervor in the South, Heyman discovered through research that evangelicalism was not accepted widely in the colonial age of the South. Evangelicalism opposed slavery and promoted equality – not selling points for many colonial white male Southerners.

Heyman uncovered the transformation of evangelicalism in the South and the Biblical integration into Southern culture and life.

## Free Web-based Resources

**The Journal of Southern Religion** (annotated in the [Journals/Serials](#) section)

**The Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life** (ISJL)

- Has the full-text of [Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities](#)
- Has an active Twitter feed at <https://twitter.com/TheISJL>
- Has an active blog feed on the website

## Special Collections

**Religion in North Carolina Digital Collection**

- A 2012 grant funded collaborative effort with UNC, Duke and Wake Forest
- Browse by date issues, title, author, subject or volume
- Not only covers Christianity in North Carolina but also other religious faiths
- Over 6,000 items in the collection

**Ralph W. Hood and W. Paul Williamson Holiness Churches of Appalachia Recordings and Interviews**

- Digital collection is a sample of the 400 hours of recordings and interviews in southeastern United States
- Documents serpent handling and other holiness traditions
- Videos make up the digital collection

## Databases and Online Encyclopedias

**ATLA Religion Database with ATLA Serials**

- Essays, journal articles, other resources
- EBSCO search platform
- Subject search for Southern States--religion
- Keyword search = religion AND American South

**Oxford Reference Online**

- Searchable subject reference books
- UT-Knoxville collection has 13 subject reference books in religion

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