

**DEBORAH ANN WONG, ThD**  
*Curriculum Vitae*

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*Seeking to bridge the Church and Academy as a worship leader for theologians and a theologian for worship leaders*

## **EDUCATION**

Doctor of Theology, 2025, Duke University Divinity School, Durham, NC

Major: Liturgical Studies

Minor: Christian Formation

Dissertation: Augustine Sings Hillsong: An Affective Theology of Contemporary Praise & Worship

Committee: Lester Ruth (chair), Jeremy S. Begbie, J. Warren Smith, Fred P. Edie, James K.A. Smith

Master of Divinity (summa cum laude), 2019, Duke University Divinity School, Durham, NC

Certificate in Theology and the Arts

Thesis: "The Heart of Worship": The History and Development of Prayer and Praise in Wesley Methodist Church Singapore

Advisor: Lester Ruth, Research Professor of Christian Worship

Bachelor of Arts in American Studies (magna cum laude), 2013, Carleton College, Northfield, MN

Thesis: What We Talk About When We Talk About Diversity: International Student Experiences as Foreigners in the United States

Advisor: Deborah Appleman, Hollis L. Caswell Professor of Educational Studies

## **FELLOWSHIPS, AWARDS & GRANTS**

Awarded full scholarship for North American Academy of Liturgy Annual Meeting, Kansas City, MO, 2022.

John Wesley Fellowship, A Foundation for Theological Education, 2021-2025.

Conference Bursary Award, Christian Congregational Music Conference: Local and Global Perspectives, Ripon College, Cuddesdon, Oxford (virtual), 2021.

Awarded (with Lester Ruth, Adam Perez, Glenn Stallsmith, and Jonathan Ottaway) Teacher-Scholar grant from the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, 2020.

Seminarian Award of the Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts, 2019.

Hoyt Hickman Award for Excellence in Liturgics, Duke Divinity School, 2019.

Conference Scholarship, International Writing Centers Association Conference, San Diego, CA, 2012.

Conference Travel Grant, International Writing Centers Association Conference, San Diego, CA, 2012.

Conference Travel Grant, Midwest Writing Centers Association Biennial Fall Conference, Madison, WI, 2011.

## SCHOLARSHIP

### *Journal Articles*

["From the Mouths of Babes: Lessons in Making a Joyful Noise unto the Lord."](#) *Religions* 15, no. 12 (2024).

["'Church is the New Radio': Worship and the WOW Series \(1996-2019\)." Co-authored with Joshua Kalin Busman.](#) *Liturgy* 38 no.4 (2023), 41-51.

["Charismatic Piety: Uncovering the Hidden Impact of the Charismatic Movement."](#) *Liturgy* 37 no.3 (2022), 3-10.

["Transcending Tradition: A Reappraisal of Methods for Studying Charismatic Worship."](#) *Proceedings of the North American Academy of Liturgy*, Annual Meeting, Kansas City, Missouri (2-5 January, 2022), 84-99.

["Liturgy in Lockdown: Restricted Movement, Expanded Worship."](#) *Religions* 13.1 (2021), 25.

### *Articles in Edited Volumes*

"Appendix A: Sample Service Focusing on John 2:1-11" in *Flow: The Ancient Way to Do Contemporary Worship* (ed. Lester Ruth; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2020), 101-115. Translated into Korean and Bahasa Indonesia.

"Singapore." In *Historical Dictionary of Methodism*. Fourth Edition. Edited by Jennifer L. Woodruff Tait and Chris Anderson. Rowman & Littlefield, 2025.

### *Academic Conference Presentations*

"Augustine Sings Hillsong: A Practical Theology of 'Whoa's,'" Panel presentation, "Building on *A History of Contemporary Praise & Worship: New Directions in the Study of Contemporary Worship*," Society of Christian Scholarship in Music Conference, Durham, NC, March 3, 2023.

"Transcending Tradition: A Reappraisal of Methods for Studying Charismatic Worship," Paper presentation, Exploring Contemporary & Alternative Worship Seminar, North American Academy of Liturgy (NAAL) Annual Meeting, Kansas City, MO, January 4, 2022.

"The Charismatic Roots of Contemporary Praise and Worship in Singapore Methodism," Panel presentation, "Constructing a Fuller Historiography of Contemporary Praise & Worship Practices," *Christian Congregational Music: Local and Global Perspectives*, Ripon College, Cuddesdon, Oxford (Online), July 26 – August 6, 2021.

"Liturgy in Lockdown: Expanding the Notion of Church," Paper presentation, *Pandemic & Religion*, Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life Virtual Graduate Student Conference, Online, February 27, 2021.

"Liturgy in Lockdown: Unlocking the Sacramentality of Everyday Life," *Pandemic Liturgy & Issues of Inequality*, North American Academy of Liturgy Emerging Scholars Symposium, Online, January 6-7, 2021. Available at [https://youtu.be/SsmhjE\\_fmP8](https://youtu.be/SsmhjE_fmP8).

"Charismatic versus Contemporary: Praise and Worship in Singapore Methodism," Paper presentation, Exploring Contemporary & Alternative Worship Seminar, North American Academy of Liturgy Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA, January 3-4, 2020.

"Mind the Gap: Reimagining our Institutional Identities," Workshop, *Lines in the Sand: How Writing Centers Draw and Redraw Boundaries*, International Writing Centers Association Conference, San Diego, CA, October 26, 2012.

“Weaving an Effective Web of Writing Center Relations at Small Liberal Arts Colleges,” Panel discussion, *On the Isthmus*, Midwest Writing Centers Association Biennial Fall Conference, Madison, WI, October 21, 2011.

### **Popular Level Articles**

“The North American Academy of Liturgy: 2022 Annual Meeting, Kansas City, MO.” *CrossAccent* 30, no. 1 (Spring 2022): 32-33.

“[Fasting: An Invitation to a Lenten Way of Life.](#)” *Reformed Worship* 142 (Dec 2021).

“Report on North American Academy of Liturgy: Emerging Scholars Symposium, January 6-7, 2021.” *CrossAccent* 29, no. 2 (Summer 2021): 28-29.

“[Finding God in a Pandemic and Beyond: Online and Ordinary Sacred Places.](#)” *Studying Congregations*. July 6, 2021. <https://studyingcongregations.org/finding-god-in-a-pandemic-and-beyond-online-and-ordinary-sacred-places>.

“[Networked Congregations: Together and Apart.](#)” *Studying Congregations*. June 23, 2021. <https://studyingcongregations.org/networked-congregations-together-and-apart>.

### **Book Reviews**

Review of Sabrina Müller’s *Religious Experience and Its Transformational Power: Qualitative and Hermeneutic Approaches to a Practical Theological Foundational Concept* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2023) for *Practical Theology* 16, no.6 (2023): 841-842.

Review of Fred P. Edie & Mark A. Lamport’s *Nurturing Faith: A Practical Theology for Educating Christians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2021) for *Practical Theology* 15, no. 1-2 (2022): 175-177. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1756073X.2022.2040678>.

Review of Roberta R. King’s *Global Arts and Christian Witness: Exegeting Culture, Translating the Message, and Communicating Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019) for *Missiology* 49, no. 2 (April 2021): 228-229. <https://doi-org.proxy.lib.duke.edu/10.1177%2F00918296211009326e>.

## **PRACTICE**

### **Teaching Experience**

Trinity Theological College, Singapore

100,000 Sundays: The History of Christian Worship and Its Ongoing Relevance for Today, March 19 – April 30, 2024 (online).

Duke University Divinity School, Durham, NC

Introduction to Christian Worship, Teaching Assistant: Spring 2021 (online), Summer 2021 (online), Fall 2021, Fall 2022, Fall 2023

Songwriting and Theology, Teaching Assistant: Fall 2021

Guest lecture: “Singing Our Lives Before God,” Worship and Christian Formation, Duke Divinity School, March 18, 2021 (online)

Global Readings of Scripture, Teaching Assistant: Spring 2023.

Academia English and Writing Center, Singapore

English and Writing, Associate Teacher and Curriculum Writer, 2015-2017

Methodist Girls' School (Secondary), Singapore

8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies, Teacher (2013-2014)

8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade History, Teacher (2013-2014)

### ***Other Teaching & Speaking Engagements***

"The Influence of the "Big 4" Megachurches on Worship Music," Panel, Calvin Symposium on Worship, Calvin University, Grand Rapids, MI, February 9, 2024.

"Biblical and Theological Foundations for Worship," Lecture, Certificate in Christian Worship, Methodist School of Music, Singapore, June 17, 2023.

"A Brief History of Christian Worship," Lecture, Certificate in Christian Worship, Methodist School of Music, Singapore, June 17, 2023.

"Planning Invitational and Participatory Worship," Workshop, Office of New Faith Communities Common Learning Days, North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church, Durham, NC, October 11-12, 2022.

"The Practice of Worship Leading," Workshop, Certificate in Christian Worship, Methodist School of Music, Singapore, September 28, 2022 (via Zoom).

"The Role of the Worship Leader," Seminar, Certificate in Christian Worship, Methodist School of Music, Singapore, September 24, 2022 (via Zoom).

"Flow 2.0: Digging Deeper into Doing Contemporary Worship," Webinar, Shepherding Souls in Worship series, Methodist School of Music, Singapore, February 18 & 25, 2022 (online).

"Flow: The Ancient Way to do Contemporary Worship (Ibadah yang Mengalir: Bagaimana Mewujudkan Ibadah Style Kontemporer dalam Gereja Tradisional?)," Webinar and book discussion, jointly hosted by Literatur Perkantas Jatim, Wonders of Worship, and Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Reformed Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia, January 17, 2022 (online).

"Blended Worship," Panel discussion, *Flow: The Ancient Way to do Contemporary Worship*, Methodist School of Music Worship Symposium, Singapore, June 25, 2021 (online).

"Extemporaneity, Free Worship, Worship Words," Panel discussion, *Flow: The Ancient Way to do Contemporary Worship*, Methodist School of Music Worship Symposium, Singapore, June 24, 2021 (online).

"Flow: Finding an Ancient Way to Contemporary Worship," Webinar, Shepherding Souls in Worship series, Methodist School of Music, Singapore, August 7, 2020 (online).

"Worship Leading 101," Workshop, University of North Carolina Wesley Foundation, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA, February 19, 2019.

"What is Worship?," Workshop, Geomot Methodist Church, Daejeon, Korea, 2016.

"Worship Leading 101," Workshop, Charis Methodist Church, Singapore, 2016.

"Trusting God (Romans 15:13)," 1<sup>st</sup> Singapore Company Girls' Brigade, Singapore, 2015.

"Band Dynamics 101," Workshop, Live for Christ Youth Ministry, Kyotanabe, Japan, 2015.

## ***Worship & Music Leadership***

|                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2025 July      | Worship Leader, Asian Pastors' Convocation, North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church, Salter Path, NC (July 21-24)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 2025 – Present | Worship Leader, Oxford United Methodist Church, Oxford, NC                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 2023 – Present | Worship Leader, Single Cell Worship, North Carolina Correctional Institute for Women, Raleigh, NC (monthly)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 2023 – Present | House Band Co-Leader, <a href="#">Pilgrimage</a> , North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church, Rocky Mount, NC (annual event)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 2022 – Present | Worship Leader, First on Chatham, Cary United Methodist Church, Cary, NC                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 2022 Oct       | Worship Leader, Common Table National Gathering, Durham, NC (Oct 4-6)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 2022 Sept      | Worship Leader, <i>Leitourgia</i> Opening Retreat, Seattle Pacific University, Seattle, WA (Sept 23-25)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 2022 July      | Worship Leader, The Glen Workshop, Image Journal, Asheville, NC (July 24-30)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 2022 July      | Daily Prayer Leader, The Summit Youth Academy, Southwestern College, Winfield, KS (July 10-16)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 2021           | Goodson Chapel Summer Worship Assistant, Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 2018 – 2019    | Artist-in-Residence, Duke Memorial UMC, Durham, NC                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 2017 – 2019    | Goodson Chapel Worship Intern, Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 2017 – 2019    | Chapel Band Lead Coordinator, Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 2017 – 2018    | Ministerial Intern, Union Grove UMC, Hillsborough, NC                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 2016 – 2017    | Gospel Choir member, Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 2010 – 2013    | Mustard Seed Band Worship and Ministry Leader, Carleton College, Northfield, MN                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 2009           | LoveMGS Annual Worship Event, Chairperson and Worship Leader, Methodist Girls' School Alumnae Association, Singapore                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 2005 – 2015    | LoveMGS Annual Worship Event, Worship Team, Methodist Girls' School Alumnae Association, Singapore                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 2005 – 2016    | Worship Leader, Barker Road Methodist Church, Singapore                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 2005 – 2016    | Worship Leader, Methodist Girls' School, Singapore                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Various        | Worship leader for Fusion 2016 (Singapore), Bible Society of Singapore D6 Family Conference, YMCA Singapore, World Vision Singapore, LoveSingapore daily morning prayer (Singapore), Geomot Methodist Church (Korea), Live for Christ Youth Ministry (Japan), Societas Homiletica Conference 2018 (Durham, NC), The Navigators African American Congress 2018 (Greensboro, NC), Rougemont UMC (Rougemont, NC), Oak Church (Durham, NC), The Peak UMC (Apex, NC), Orange UMC (Chapel Hill, NC), Christ UMC (Chapel Hill, NC), NCCIW Raleigh Women's Prison (Raleigh, NC), others. |

## **MEDIA PUBLICATIONS**

[“Babies, Theology, and True Praise Beyond Words,”](#) Podcast episode, *The Worship Nerds*, April 4, 2025.

[“WOW! Worship \(ft. Joshua Busman and Debbie Wong\),”](#) Podcast episode, *The Worship Nerds*, July 2, 2024.

“Worship and Justice,” A Six-lesson Video and Written Curriculum on Worship and Justice for High School Students, *Leitourgia* (in process)

["Flow: The Ancient Way to Do Contemporary Worship,"](#) Podcast episode, *New Books Network with Ryan Shelton*, March 8, 2021.

["Evening Prayer, 2.27.21,"](#) Podcast, *Leitourgia Podcast*, February 27, 2021.

Liturgist (words), "[A Prayer in Search of Holy Connection](#)," visual liturgy in collaboration with *The Work of the People*, Dec 2020.

"[Flow: The Ancient Way to Do Contemporary Worship, Part 2](#)," Podcast, *Music and the Church* with Sarah Bereza, Episode 55, Oct. 12, 2020.

Lead vocals, back-up vocals, acoustic guitar on *Saviour Messiah King*, released July 17, 2016 by Jocelyn Ong, produced by Loong, Finding My Sound Productions.

Backup vocals on *Love of Another Kind EP*, released June 16, 2015 by Yap Wei Chiang, produced by Yap Wei Chiang.

## SERVICE & LEADERSHIP

|             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2024 – 2025 | Curriculum Committee Member, <i>Duke Divinity School, Durham, USA</i> .                                                                                                                                                               |
| 2023 – 2024 | CCLI + Beyond Vetting Project, <i>UMC Discipleship Ministries, USA</i> .<br><a href="https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/ccli-top-100-beyond-project">https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/ccli-top-100-beyond-project</a> . |
| 2020 – 2023 | Curriculum Committee Member, <i>Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC</i>                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 2020        | CCLI + Beyond Vetting Project, <i>UMC Discipleship Ministries, USA</i> .<br><a href="https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/ccli-top-100-beyond-project">https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/ccli-top-100-beyond-project</a> . |
| 2020        | Worship & Christian Vocation Task Force member, <i>Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC</i>                                                                                                                                               |
| 2020        | Chapel Task Force, <i>Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC</i>                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 2018 – 2019 | Divinity Student Council, Co-President, <i>Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC</i>                                                                                                                                                       |
| 2017 – 2019 | Chapel Band, Lead Coordinator, <i>Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC</i>                                                                                                                                                                |
| 2017 – 2018 | Asian Theology Group, Co-Facilitator, <i>Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC</i>                                                                                                                                                         |
| 2017        | Project BRI(DDD)GE, Leader, <i>Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC</i>                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 2017        | Worship and Spirituality Committee, Member, <i>Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC</i>                                                                                                                                                   |
| 2015 – 2016 | Small Group Leader, <i>Barker Road Methodist Church, Singapore</i>                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 2014 –      | Committee Member, Methodist Girls' School Alumnae Association, <i>Singapore</i>                                                                                                                                                       |
| 2014 – 2015 | Young Adults Small Group Ministry, Coordinator, <i>Barker Road Methodist Church, Singapore</i>                                                                                                                                        |
| 2014        | Young Adults Ministry Retreat, Chairperson, <i>Barker Road Methodist Church, Singapore</i>                                                                                                                                            |
| 2012 – 2013 | Lead Writing Consultant, <i>Carleton College Writing Center, Northfield, MN</i>                                                                                                                                                       |
| 2007        | Annual Youth Camp, Camp Commandant, <i>Barker Road Methodist Church, Singapore</i>                                                                                                                                                    |

## OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE

|             |                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2009 –      | Freelance Musician                                                                                                                                      |
| 2019 – 2020 | Research Assistant to Dr. Lester Ruth, Research Professor of Christian Worship, <i>Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC</i>                                 |
| 2019 – 2020 | Research Assistant to Dr. Jerusha Neal, Assistant Professor of Homiletics, <i>Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC</i>                                      |
| 2015 – 2017 | Curriculum Writer, <i>Academia English and Writing Center, Singapore</i>                                                                                |
| 2015 – 2016 | Associate Teacher, <i>Academia English and Writing Center, Singapore</i>                                                                                |
| 2015        | Account Executive, <i>Optimum Media Direction, Omnicom Media Group, Singapore</i>                                                                       |
| 2013 – 2017 | Outside Admissions Reader, <i>Yale-NUS College, Singapore</i>                                                                                           |
| 2013 – 2014 | Long-term Substitute Teacher (8 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> grade History, Social Studies), <i>Methodist Girls' School (Secondary), Singapore</i> |
| 2010 – 2013 | Writing Consultant, <i>Carleton College Writing Center, Northfield, MN</i>                                                                              |

## PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Journal of Childhood and Religion: member of editorial board (2025 – present)

The Liturgical Conference: board member (2023 – present); secretary (2025 – present)

North American Academy of Liturgy: member of Exploring Contemporary and Alternative Worship seminar group (2022 – present)

Society for Christian Scholarship in Music: member (2023 – present)

## **CHURCH AFFILIATION**

Denomination: Methodist Church of Singapore

Membership: Barker Road Methodist Church (Singapore)

## **ADDITIONAL SKILLS**

**Languages:** English (native), Mandarin Chinese (fluent), Spanish (elementary)

**Music:** guitar, vocals, piano, drum kit, cajon