

TODAY'S PREACHER



The Reverend Mark Andrew Jefferson, Ph.D., before joining the Virginia Theological Seminary faculty in 2016, was an adjunct professor at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh, PA, and previously taught at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, GA.

Dr. Jefferson holds a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Religion focusing on Homiletics from Emory University where he was a doctoral fellow for the Fund for Theological Exploration (FTE) and the Lilly Foundation. During his doctoral work, he received the W.E.B. Du Bois Award from the Candler School of Theology. Active in the life of the church in graduate school in Atlanta, Dr. Jefferson was the Director of Christian Education at The Greater Travelers Rest Baptist Church, which, at the time, was counted as one of the fastest-growing churches in the country, according to Outreach Magazine. He holds a Master of Divinity degree from the Candler School of Theology at Emory University, where he concentrated his coursework in homiletics, completed a certificate in Black Church Studies, and served as President of the Black Student Caucus. He majored in Political Science and concentrated in Public Administration at Norfolk State University (NSU) in Norfolk, Virginia. While at NSU, he served as the President of Pi Sigma Alpha (the political science honor society), earned the Vince Lombardi Most Outstanding Football Athlete Award, and was named a Coca-Cola Academic All-American.

Dr. Jefferson's preaching, scholarship, and engagement with popular culture outline his commitment to be a public theologian. The critical engagement of the American social imagination and African American socio-political enfranchisement and empowerment are areas of concentration for Dr. Jefferson's life and work.

Dr. Jefferson is an emerging scholar interested in the ways that consciousness and imagination inform the practice of preaching. His dissertation titled "Beyond the Talented Tenth: W.E.B. Du Bois, the Hip-Hop Emcee, and the Reimagination of African American Homiletics" explores Du Bois' advocacy of the "Talented Tenth" social imagination and its influence in the formation of black preachers and preaching. In his upcoming book, tentatively titled, *The Miseducation of the African American Preacher*, Dr. Jefferson extends the work of Carter G. Woodson and his critique of the educational and cultural formation of African American leaders, namely preachers, by arguing that they are being formed to ineffectively preach and connect with the black masses. Dr. Jefferson has also contributed to the African American Lectionary and the Academy of Preachers.

Dr. Jefferson is an internationally respected preacher and teacher of preachers. He was inducted into the Martin Luther King, Jr. Board of Preachers at Morehouse College and appeared in *The Nassau Guardian* (Bahamas). He has preached at churches such as: Washington National Cathedral, Washington, D.C.; Alfred Street Baptist Church, Alexandria, VA; Mt. Ararat Baptist Church, Pittsburgh, PA; The House of Hope Atlanta, Decatur, GA; Friendship Baptist Church, Atlanta, GA; Trinity Cathedral, Phoenix, AZ; Alexandria Detention Center, Alexandria, VA and Bethel A.M.E, Hampton, VA among many others churches, conferences, chapels, public gatherings, and occasions. Dr. Jefferson was selected for the historic Lenten Preaching Series at Calvary Episcopal Church, in Memphis, TN. VTS is honoring its 200th anniversary on October 15, 2023, and in contribution to this effort, Dr. Jefferson is currently preaching 200 sermons locally, nationally, and internationally in the years leading up to the Bicentennial Celebration.

Dr. Jefferson engages popular culture through lectures, panels, presentations, and social media. He was a featured panelist at the Something in the Water music festival sponsored by the African American Museum for History and Culture. His blog posts have been featured on Urban Cusp and The Root. He is invited to engage on social media panels, programs, and virtual events.

Dr. Jefferson, a native of Hampton, Virginia, is the quarterback for the Seminary's flag football team, the Fighting Friars.