

Full name: *Herbert Burnett (Bert) Strange*

What subject did you study? *PhD in Theology*

Year of Graduation: *1979*

Current Job Title: *Lead Instructor in Religion*

Current Employer/Organisation Name: *Greenville Technical College, Greenville, South Carolina USA*

Can you give us an overview of what you have done since you completed your research degree?

It's been 40 years, so this is literally a long story. After returning to the States, I taught and was chaplain at a private secondary school, and then spent 20 years as a U. S. Army chaplain, retiring in 2002. I served in a variety of roles including unit chaplain, headquarters staff officer, resource manager, and (twice) Army Service School instructor. I was posted to Germany and Korea as well as several stateside assignments. I also was able to "scratch my academic itch" by teaching as an adjunct instructor for two universities that at extension campuses on the posts where I served. Since retiring, I have taught as an adjunct at my undergraduate alma mater, Furman University, and at Greenville Tech

How did you become interested in the area that you work in?

My career path has been interesting, to say the least. I started on a military career which was interrupted by the call to ministry and attending seminary. It was in seminary that the idea of earning a PhD and teaching began, and so found myself at Exeter. Then, as noted above, my ministry, military and academic careers coexisted for a couple of decades

How did you find opportunities in the area you work in and how did the recruitment process work?

It is probably fair to say that I didn't really choose my careers in the usual sense, but they chose me, each for its own appropriate time. The thing I enjoy most is simply interacting with students in the classroom, and watching them grasp concepts that may not have been "on their radar" before. It's hard to match watching those "Aha" moments take place

What does your current role involve?

In June 2018, having had enough of retirement, I became the full-time religion instructor at Greenville Tech. As the saying goes, "Find a job that you would do for free, and get someone to pay you for it." I have also had a busy life away from work as a member of various community organizations, including the Rotary Club of Greenville (of which I was President, 2011-2012) and Greenville's First Baptist Church (as deacon, committee member and chair, and Sunday School teacher)

What did you enjoy most about your research degree?

I'm not sure I could honestly say that "living in the stacks" doing research was always enjoyable, but the opportunity to associate with the other members of the department --



faculty, staff and students -- provided enough joy to see me through. The biggest highlight was obviously having Professor Porter tell me that I had passed the viva, and could now have the title of "Doctor" in front of my name.

What skills and experiences have been most useful for your career?

Learning how to do research at the doctoral level was intense, but worthwhile.

Remembering to keep the end result in mind when things seemed not always to be going as smoothly as I had hoped was an invaluable lesson. Above all, enjoy the experience. Life is too short to be doing something that really does not give you pleasure.

What advice would you give to a current PGR who wishes to pursue your career?

Be prepared to work hard to gain the appropriate credentials. Remember that, just because you have gained those coveted degrees, your path may still be a circuitous one. Doing other things while you wait is not wasted time, but gives you valuable experiences you can apply when the opportunity arises

What are your plans for the future?

Since I am in my post-retirement full-time job, I plan to continue to teach as long as I am able and as long as it remains fun

Do you have any tips or advice for beginning a career or working in your industry/sector?

Work hard, Be prepared, Be patient. Enjoy the ride