

Southeast Conference on Christianity and Literature

Transformative Language: Literacies of Mind, Body, and Spirit

Oct. 22-24, 2026



Samford University

WELCOME

On behalf of the Samford University community, I am delighted to welcome you to our beautiful campus for the Southeast Regional Conference on Christianity and Literature.

It is a special privilege to host this gathering for the first time, and I am grateful to my colleagues for bringing together undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and scholars from across the Southeast and beyond. Your presence reflects a shared commitment to exploring the enduring relationship between faith, language, and literature.

This year's theme, "Transformative Language: Literacies of Mind, Body, and Soul," offers a fitting opportunity to reflect on the 500th anniversary of William Tyndale's English New Testament and the remarkable ways language shapes understanding, imagination, and spiritual formation.

As a Christian university committed to academic excellence and the integration of faith and learning, Samford is honored you are here. I hope your time on campus is intellectually enriching, encouraging, and filled with meaningful connections. Thank you for joining us and welcome to Samford University.

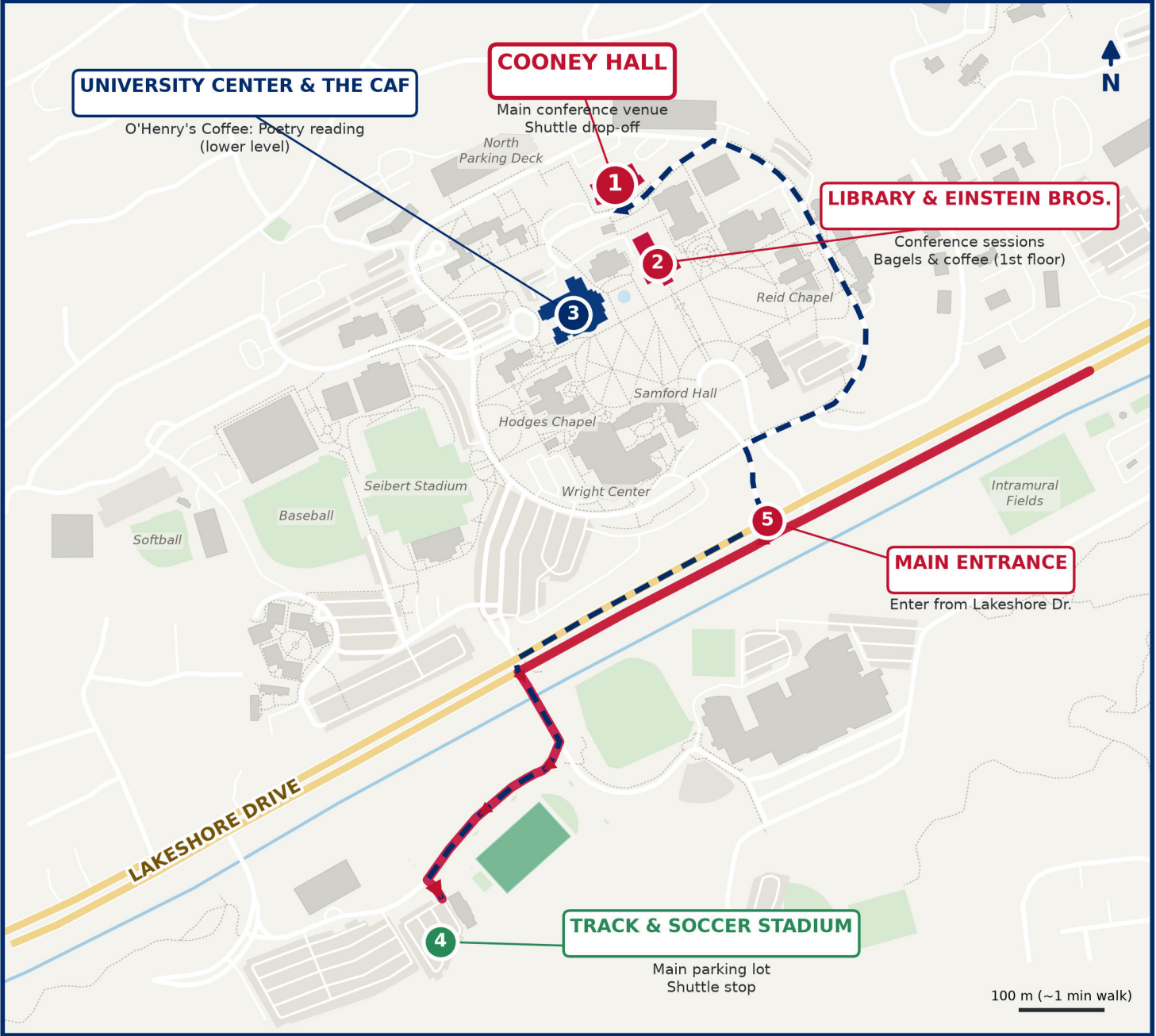
Sincerely,



Beck A. Taylor, Ph.D.
President



GETTING AROUND



KEY

- 1 Cooney Hall: conference sessions • shuttle drop-off
- 2 Library: conference sessions • Einstein Bros. Bagels (1st floor)
- 3 University Center: The Caf (upper) • O'Henry's Coffee: poetry reading
- 4 Track & Soccer Stadium lot (south of Lakeshore): PARK HERE • shuttle stop
- 5 Main entrance (gate) off Lakeshore Drive

- Driving route to parking
- Shuttle route
- Walking paths

Approx. walking times
Parking → Cooney Hall: shuttle ~4 min
(walking: ~15 min, crosses Lakeshore Dr.)
Cooney Hall → Library: ~2 min
Cooney Hall → University Center: ~3 min

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



DR. JASON BAXTER
DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR BEAUTY AND
CULTURE AT BENEDICTINE UNIVERSITY

Jason Baxter is the Director of the Center for Beauty and Culture at Benedictine University and a prolific author, speaker, and educator. He has published seven books, including *The Medieval Mind of C.S. Lewis*, *Why Literature Still Matters* and *A New Translation of Dante's Inferno*. Widely featured across media ranging from podcasts such as *The Literary Life*, *Mars Hill Audio Journal* and *The After Dinner Scholar* to appearances on EWTN, Baxter explores the intersection of medieval thought, technology, and modernity for both popular and academic audiences. His Substack, *Beauty Matters*, examines the enduring relevance of Dante and Lewis and the resilience of sacramental ways of understanding reality in a digital age.

Word and Image

An Evening of Poetry and Conversation

Thursday, October 22 @ 5 p.m.

Harry's Coffeehouse

Join us for an evening of poetry and conversation in conjunction with the Southeastern Conference on Christianity and Literature. Three poets will read from their work and discuss poetry and faith in light of the conference's theme,

**"Transformative Language:
Literacies of Mind, Body, and Soul."**

Featured Poets:

Alex Mouw

Assistant professor of English
at Samford University and
author of the poetry collection
The Unbelieving Yelp of Prey.

Jermaine Thompson

Poet and educator based in
Birmingham, Alabama, whose
debut collection, *Sepulchre*,
is forthcoming from
Texas Review Press in 2027.

Haley Hodges

Shenandoah Valley poet,
mother and author of
Eros Rex (Orison Books).



A Celebration of the 500th Anniversary of Tyndale's Translation of the New Testament



In conjunction with the Southeast Regional Conference on Christianity and Literature, join us to view a collection of antiquarian texts from Emory University's Pitts Theological Library and J. Michael Morgan English Bible & Psalmody Collection.

On display will be Richard Jugge's Tyndale New Testament with Woodcuts, Erasmus's Greek New Testament, the Coverdale Bible, Foxe's Book of Martyrs and more.

**Join us for a presentation with
Thomas Fulton from
Rutgers University:**

**The Origins of the
English New Testament:
A Reassessment on the
500th Anniversary of
Tyndale's First Edition**

10/23 from 9–10:15 a.m.
Regions Community Resource
Room, Cooney Hall

 **Samford University**
Howard College of Arts and Sciences



AT A GLANCE

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2026

11AM – 12PM – CHECK IN

4TH FLOOR REGIONS ROOM

12:00 – 1:15 SESSION A

1:30 – 2:45 SESSION B

2:50 – 3:15 – COFFEE & SNACKS

4TH FLOOR REGIONS ROOM

3:15 – 4:30 – SESSION C

5:00 – 7:00 – POETRY READING

HARRY'S CAFE – STUDENT CENTER

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2026

8:30 – 9:00 – CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST

9:00 – 10:15 – THOMAS FULTON

4TH FLOOR REGIONS ROOM

10:30 – 11:45 SESSION D

11:50 – 1:30 – LUNCH

1:30 – 2:45 SESSION E

2:50 – 3:15 – COFFEE & SNACKS

4TH FLOOR REGIONS ROOM

3:15 – 4:30 – SESSION F

5:00 – 7:00 – JASON BAXTER

BANQUET – 4TH FLOOR REGIONS ROOM

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2026

9:00–9:30 CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST

9:30 – 11:15 – SESSION G

11:30 – 12:45 – SESSION H

1:00 – 1:30 – CHECKOUT & BUSINESS

MEETING – 4TH FLOOR REGIONS ROOM



NEARBY

EINSTEIN BROS. BAGELS – CAMPUS LIBRARY
HOURS – 7:30 – 8PM TH
7:30 – 2P FRI

FRIDAY LUNCH OPTIONS

THE CAF

LOCATED IN THE HEART OF CAMPUS, THE CAF IS OUR MAIN DINING HALL SERVING UP A WIDE VARIETY OF OPTIONS DAILY AT MULTIPLE STATIONS. FROM COMFORT FOOD AND GLOBAL FLAVORS TO FRESH SALADS AND MADE-TO-ORDER FAVORITES, THERE'S SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE, MORNING, NOON, AND NIGHT. WHETHER YOU'RE STOPPING BY FOR BREAKFAST, LUNCH, OR DINNER, THE CAF HAS YOU COVERED.

IF REQUESTED, CAF CARDS ARE AVAILABLE AT CHECK-IN. THESE OFFER ONE MEAL SWIPE AT ANY STATION, PLUS DRINKS AND A DESERT.

ALSO IN THE CAF:

- MOE'S SOUTHWEST GRILL
- CHICK-FIL-A
- O'HENRY'S

Thursday Sessions

Session A

12:00 – 1:15

Davis Library 233 – 2nd Floor – Writing Practice and Pedagogy

Raegan Harris	Analog Applications: Embodied Learning through Meaningful Writing Practice
McKenzie London	Transforming Assessment: Facilitating Authentic Learning and Dialogic Praxis
Shannon Skelton	"To Whom Shall I Tell My Grief?": On Writing, Lament, and Literacies of Loss

Cooney Hall Regions Room – 4th Floor – Theology and Translation

Rachel Byrd	Thomas More's Defense of the Church and John Foxe's Answer
George Piggford, C.S.C.	Flannery O'Connor's Bibles: Translation, Catholic Voice, and Literary Form
James Henry Allen	Without Luther, No Tyndale: The Essential Impact of Martin Luther Upon William Tyndale's Theology, Vision, and Translation Work

Cooney Hall 304 – 3rd Floor – Shakespeare and Medieval Thought*

Elliana Shaffer	Seeing Through Feeling: Cordelia and Edgar as Interpretive Guides in <i>King Lear</i>
Michael Preston Rickards	Whittling the Horns: An Examination of Benedict's Dignity in <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>
P. Austin Hooker	Prone to Wander: Medieval Eardstapa and Modern Flaneur as Roads to Faith

Cooney Hall 351 – 3rd Floor – Knowing God

Madelyne Carr	Know God, Know Love, No God, No Love
Ella Rose Becker	True and False Gospels in <i>Anne of Green Gables</i> : The Lost Development of Moral Literacy Through Classic Children's Literature
Caleb Craft	Church and Pastor as Receivers of Memory: A Theological Reflection on Lowry's <i>The Giver</i>

Thursday Sessions

Session B1:30 – 2:45

Cooney Hall 304 – 3rd Floor – Transformative Literature.: Culture & Identity

Elise Eichholtz
Georgia Wessels
Jalyn Douglas

“The White Lotus” and Being a Foreigner
“Fig Jam’ and the Mandie Series
A Lesson Before Dying and Self-Identity

Cooney Hall 351 – 3rd Floor – Linguistic Turns

James Wildeman
William Tate
Stephen R. Todd

Words That Trouble Me
Their Scattering Names: Richard Wilbur's “Theology of Naming”
Words at Play in the Greek New Testament: The Might of the Widow’s Mite and the Wit of the Syrophoenician Woman

Davis Library 233 – 2nd Floor – Writing Practice and Pedagogy

Todd Edmondson

Trevor Sanders

Johnathan F. Harris

Reading Together, Reading Alone: The Role of Community in Transforming the Spiritual and Emotional Lives of Four Fictional Readers
“Open Thou Mine Eyes”: Jean-Louis Chrétien and the Formation of Spiritual Literacy
The Virtue of Reading: A Reflection on How Narrative Fosters Virtue

Cooney Hall Regions Room – 4th Floor – Narrative and Identity

Carissa Turner Smith
John Netland

Jennette Gallogray

Baptismal and Familial Identity in Charles Chesnutt’s Fiction, Part II: *The Quarry*
Literacy and Spiritual Formation in *The Narrative of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*
Things Reconstruct: Reconfiguring the Central Language to Recover the Center

Thursday Sessions

Session C3:15 – 4:30

Cooney Hall Regions Room – 4th Floor – Texts and Spirituality

Kelsey Grissom
A. Christson
Adedoyin
Lisa Battaglia

Language Learning Strategies for the Sermon
Transformative Words: Prayer as a Literacy Practice for Mental Health, Spiritual Formation, and Human Flourishing
"Reading" Christianity: Embodiment, Materiality, and Emotion as Sources of (Female) Religiosity

Cooney Hall 351 – 3rd Floor – Bearing Witness to Faithful Justice through Literature

Jennifer West
Julianne Sandberg

A Case Study in Teaching Civil Rights Texts: A Roundtable with Students – *Featuring:* Olivia Douglas, Aria Foster, Caroline James, and Michael Preston Rickards

Davis Library 233 – 2nd Floor – A Note on the Author

Jonathan Sircy

Ashley Mulligan
Timothy Sutton

Art and Attention in David Foster Wallace's "Church Not Made with Hands"
A Knight and A Poet: William Wordsworth’s Chaucerian Rehabilitation
Re-forming T. S. Eliot

Cooney Hall 304 – 3rd Floor – On Augustine

Tristn D. Lambright

Cole Jeffrey

Milk and the Mother Tongue: The Maternal Breast, Embodied Literacy, and Spiritual (Trans)formation in Augustine’s *Confessions*
The Friend is a Second Self: Augustinian Relations in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

Friday Sessions

Session D10:30 – 11:45

Davis Library 233 – 2nd Floor – Death, Health, and the Body

Carla Capizzi	The Body as Threshold: Divine and Human Language in Euripides’ <i>Bacchae</i>
Wm. Travis Coblentz	"We have made a covenant with death": Death and the Treatment of the Other in the <i>Aeneid</i> and Luke–Acts
Lauren M. Young	Reconstructing Historical Health Literacy through Boethius' <i>The Consolation of Philosophy</i>

Cooney 351 – 3rd Floor – Faith & Suffering in 20th Century Europe

Heather A. West	Catholic Duty and Sacrifice in <i>Maria Chapdelaine</i>
Ana Carballal	Religious elements in Castelao's <i>As cruces de pedra na Galiza</i>
Mary McCullough	War and Faith: French Women’s Voices from World War I

Davis Library 235 – 2nd Floor – Original Creative Works

Christopher Lee Pipkin	<i>The Association of the Tsar's Holy Protectors, Chapter 1</i>
Joy Moore	<i>A Word You’ll Never Need to Say</i>
Paul Luikart	<i>The Realm of the Dog</i> : A Reading of Original Short Stories

Regions Room – 4th Floor – Donne and Andrewes

Chad Schrock	Doctor Donne and the End of Joy
Peter G. Epps	Per Fretum Febris: Articulation and its Failures from Donne to Coleridge
Garrett Mikulka	Incarnate Language: John 1:14 and Lancelot Andrewes's 1611 Christmas Day Sermon

Friday Sessions

Session E1:30 – 2:45

Cooney Hall 229 – 2nd Floor – Reading Beyond the Text: Translation, Empathy, and Exegesis

B. Keith Putt	Translation as Transgression or Transformation: Deciphering the Ethics of Ricoeur’s “Linguistic Hospitality”
David Strong	The Empathy Produced by The Fool’s Riddles in <i>King Lear</i>
Michael Riggins	Anagogical Exegesis in Traherne’s Third Meditation on the 6 Days of Creation

Cooney Hall 351 – 3rd Floor – The Gothic and the Grotesque

Paul Rae	The Redemptively Grotesque Narrative: A Primer
Marchbanks	
Sarah Durst	“Parker’s Back”: Cruciform Violence and the Body as Text
Laura Schrock	The Strange Cases of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Holmes: Reason, Instinct, and Drugs
Crawford	

Cooney Hall 185 – 1st Floor – Liturgy and Sound

Laura Sterrett	Unconventional Use of Conventions: Sensing Divine Beauty in James Weldon Johnson’s “Before a Painting”
Jason Crawford	Poetry, Liturgy, Sound
Kathryn Mogk	Liturgy as Birdsong in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Poetry and Polemic
Wagner	

Cooney Hall Regions Room – 4th Floor – On Feminism

Olivia Divel	The Feminine Reception of Mystical Vision in Julian of Norwich’s <i>Revelations of Divine Love</i>
Ana Brewster	Margery Kempe: Making Mystical Mayhem
Emma Rogers	A Victorian and a Modernist Walk into a Glass Ceiling

Friday Sessions

Session F **3:15 – 4:30**

Cooney Hall 229 – 2nd Floor – The Inklings

Bethia Barber	Speech Act, the Eschatological Body, and Coinherence in the Novels of Charles Williams
Christopher Lee Pipkin	When All Books Are Cookbooks: Appetite, Enchantment, and Dystopia in <i>The Silver Chair</i>
Sophie Davis	“The Mother of Sorrows: Motherhood as Eucharistic Self-Giving in George MacDonald’s <i>Lilith</i>

Davis Library 233 – 2nd Floor – Tolkien and Fantasy

Gabriela Clarke	A Horseman, a Hero, and a Hail Mary: Biblical Allusions in <i>The Lord of the Rings</i>
Ethan Snyder	The Appeal for Eucatastrophe in Modern Fantasy
Kyle DeJarnatt	Introduced to the Ancient: The Lord of the Rings as Introduction to Old English

Cooney Hall 351 – 3rd Floor – Contemporary Issues of Learning & Language Arts

Lauriellen Stankavich	Reading in an Age of Epistemic Precarity
Peter Kerry Powers	Locations of Learning: Language, Literacy, Literature, and the Liberal Arts in Africa and the United States

Cooney Hall 181 – 1st Floor – Language, Knowledge, and Poetic Form

Mark Bradshaw Busbee	Typology, Aesthetics, and Ælfric’s Old English Translation of Genesis 22
Josh Pittman	Linguistic Environment and the Epistemology of <i>The Pearl</i>
Aaron Cassidy	Milton’s Poetics of <i>Crypsis</i>

Saturday Sessions

Session G **9:30 – 11:15**

Cooney Hall 229 – 2nd Floor – Spiritual Formation and Health

Julianne Sandberg	Literature as the Spiritual Practice of Listening
Griffin Klemick/Hunter Beck	The Virtuous Spiral of Spiritual Formation and Linguistic Transformation: Some Murdochian Reflections
Noel Forlini Burt	Retrieving the Self from the Readerly Desert: Reading the Biblical Text for Spiritual Formation

Cooney Hall 351 – 3rd Floor – Reflections on Literature and Culture

Wesley Garey	Lucy Hutchinson and the Psalms
Hallie Wielfaert	Jacopone da Todi and the Kenotic Function of Mystical Poetry
Kelsey Hayes	“though the body haue been a little lustly punished”: The Body’s Importance in Early Modern Protestant Salvation Assurance as Demonstrated in the Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby

Cooney Hall 181– 1st Floor – Spirit and Flesh in “Parker’s Back”

Ralph C. Wood	Sarah Ruth and O.E. Parker as Nietzscheans in Their Will-to-Power
Susan Srigley	Transfigured by Beauty: Eastern Orthodoxy in "Parker’s Back"
Peter Candler	The Eyes of "Parker’s Back"
John Hayes	Soulless Secularity and Body-Hating Heresy

Saturday Sessions

Session H 11:30 – 12:45

Cooney Hall 189 – 1st Floor – Destruction and Redemption

- Jay Beavers
- Eyes That Do Not See, and Ears That Do Not Hear: The Bible and the Scapular in *Blood Meridian*
- Joy Poteet
- Care, Survival, and Resistance in Literature of Violence and Genocide
- Dennis Lee Sansom
- Tolstoy And Dostoevsky: Balancing Creation with Redemption

Cooney Hall 229 – 2nd Floor – Poetry, Piety, and the Embodied Life

- Ellie Joy Tankersley
- Missing the Target: Statistics, Social Media, the Imago Dei, and Virtue in “The Divine Image” and “The Unknown Citizen”
- Keely P. Resso
- Myth, Parable, and Brainrot: The Formative Power of Shared Cultural Stories
- Brooke Neal
- THE Politics of “Almost Pretty” in Jane Austen’s *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*

Cooney Hall 181 – 1st Floor – Literature and Contemporary Christian Culture

- Sam Yaziji
- Variations of the Christian Sea-Lyric: Old English Poetry, CCM, and the Oceanic Feeling
- Kelsi Matwick
- Reading the Fellowship Hall: Church Suppers, Food Discourse, and Christian Literacy in Southern Living
- Emma Stark
- "We Just Dressed It Up a Little": How The Simpsons Reads The 21st Century Church's Quest for Relevance

Cooney Hall 351 – 3rd Floor – Christ in Literary Imagination

- Alia Michele Serrano
- Honored Above the Trees of the Forest: The Cross as a Mary Figure in *The Dream of the Rood*
- Cole Hamilton
- Deciphering *The Nazarene* by Sholem Asch

DO NOT SCANDALIZE



...in
Birmingham

...near
Samford



SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE ON CHRISTIANITY AND LITERATURE

Transformative Language: Literacies of Mind, Body, and Spirit

Sponsored by the Samford Department of English and the William E. and
Wylodine H. Hull Fund for Christian Scholarship

