

JASON GEHRKE

FELLOW 2018-2020

Religious Studies
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The Lilly Fellows Program in Humanities and the Arts seeks to strengthen the quality and shape the character of church-related institutions of higher learning. Three closely related initiatives have been designed to accomplish this mission: a National Network of Church-Related Colleges and Universities that sponsors a wide variety of activities and publications that explore the Christian character of the academic vocation; a Graduate Fellowship Program that supports graduate students who are exploring vocations in church-related higher education, and the two-year, residential Postdoctoral Teaching Fellowship. As of 2018-2019 the Program has awarded seventy-nine two-year postdoctoral fellowships to teacher-scholars who seek to renew and enrich their intellectual and spiritual lives while preparing for teaching and leadership roles at institutions of church-related higher education. Fellows teach in the honors college (Christ College) and departments of the College of Arts and Sciences at Valparaiso University. In addition, Fellows conduct scholarship or creative work, participate in a two-year colloquium, and interact with representatives from a national network of 101 church-related colleges and universities.

Jason M. Gehrke is an historical theologian, whose work explores the inter-relationships of Christology, political theology, and ethics in the ancient and modern world. He earned a B.A. from Hillsdale College ('07), an M.A. in Religion from Concordia Theological Seminary ('10), and a Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Marquette University ('17), where he worked with Michel Barnes and Michael Cover. Prior to joining the Lilly Fellows Program, Jason spent a year in residence at Strasbourg University, as a Rotary Club Global Grant Scholar in Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies.

At Marquette University, Jason explored patristic receptions of classical political thought and literature (Tertullian to Augustine), Christian views of Islam in the first centuries of Islam, and modern political theology. His dissertation traces the various influences of classical political philosophy, Latin Christian theology, and immediate Roman policy on Lactantius's major work, *The Divine Institutes*. The revised manuscript, *Christus Exemplar: the Politics of Virtue in Lactantius*, explores the way North African Christianity offered Jesus Christ as the model and basis for a re-imagining of ancient Roman political ideals. Jason seeks to show that through Lactantius, North African Christianity made significant contributions to developing notions of human dignity, equality, and rights in the Latin context.

As an historian of Christian thought, Jason seeks to correct, uncover, and recall the memory of Christianity in service to the Church and the world. His research continues to explore the inter-relationship of theology, ethics, and politics in both ancient and modern contexts.

Jason hopes to cultivate in his students the capacity for charitable and challenging dialogue informed by close reading of texts and a habit of careful listening. At Valparaiso, he is teaching the Just War Tradition, Pre-modern Inter-Religious Dialogues, and an Introduction to the Christian Tradition, as well as Christ College's great books seminar, Texts and Contexts I and II. Previously, he has taught in Valparaiso's CORE program, and in seminars on Martin Luther and C.S. Lewis at Marquette University.

For recent publications, please see valpo.academia.edu/jasongehrke.

