

JASON GEHRKE

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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 2019-2020 the Program has awarded eighty 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 100 church-related colleges and universities.

Jason M. Gehrke is an historian of Christianity focusing on religion and political thought in Late Antiquity. He holds a BA from Hillsdale College ('07), an MA from Concordia Theological Seminary, and a PhD in Religious Studies from Marquette University ('18), where Michel Barnes (Patristics) and Michael Cover (JCA) co-directed his dissertation. Prior to joining the Lilly Fellows Program, Jason was a Rotary International Global Grant Scholar in Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies at Strasbourg University.

Jason's research explores the reception of Roman political thought and literature in North African Christianity and Hellenistic Judaism, as well as Christian views of Islam in Late Antiquity. Within those fields, Jason also works on the reception history of the New Testament with a focus on the reception of Paul and John in early Christianity.

Jason is completing revisions on a book manuscript that offers a new account of the thought of Lactantius, a major figure in the court of Constantine. Jason's article, "Lactantius's Power Theology," *Nova et Vetera* 17:3 (2019): 683-715 is an early product of this research. Jason's manuscript, *The Power of God: Virtus in the pre-Nicene Latin Theology of Lactantius*, demonstrates that Lactantius's response to persecution applies pre-Nicene Latin theological arguments about the equal status and dignity of the Father and Son in a political argument about the equality of persons and their rights under divine and human law.

As a teacher, Jason is committed to teaching and research in a liberal arts setting. He works to cultivate in his students a capacity for charitable and challenging dialogue informed by close reading of texts, an appreciation for the historical context of an author's thought, and a habit of careful listening. At Valparaiso, his teaching includes, "An Introduction to the Just War Tradition," as well as "The Christian Epic from Vergil to Milton," "An Introduction to the Christian Tradition: Theology and Social Thought," and Christ College's, "First Year Program: Texts and Contexts I and II."

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

