Derek R. Nelson

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**Academic Positions**

2012-present: Wabash College, Crawfordsville, IN.

Professor and Chair of Religion; Director of Wabash Pastoral Leadership Program (Associate Professor 2012-17); Stephen S. Bowen Professor of the Liberal Arts (2017- present)

*Courses taught:*

Christianity in Ancient Rome

History of Christianity to the Reformation

History of Christianity from Reformation to the Modern Era

Reformation Theo: Luther & Calvin

Theological Ethics

Religion and the Arts: Film

Enduring Questions (Freshmen Seminar)

Introduction to Theology

Augustine and Aquinas

Religion and Literature

Contemporary Theology

God and Ethics

The Meaning of Life: Part I (freshmen tutorial)

2006-2012: Thiel College, Greenville, PA.

Chair of Religion (2008-12), Assistant (2006-10) and Associate (2010-12) Professor, & Co-Director of Thiel Global Institute (2007-12).

*Courses taught:*

History of Christianity

Religious Studies Senior Seminar

Introduction to Study of Religion

Interp. Jewish/Christian Scriptures

World Religions

Seminar in Judaism

Religion, Fiction and Pop Culture

Ethics in Barth and Bonhoeffer

Luther and the Reformation

Religion and Film

Practical Value of the Liberal Arts

First Year Seminars (various)

Liberation Theology

Introduction to Theology

**Education**

Degrees Earned:

2006 Ph.D., Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA, Systematic and Philosophical Theology

Dissertation Readers: Ted Peters, chair, David Kelsey, Rosemary Ruether and Richard Schenk, OP. Title: “Some Aspects of the Doctrine of Sin in Selected Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Theologies.”

2002 M.Div., Yale University, New Haven, CT. Major Areas: Philosophy of Religion, History of Christianity and Systematic Theology.

1999 A.B., Wabash College, Crawfordsville, IN. Major: Religion; Minor: Chemistry; *summa cum laude*.

Additional Study:

2006 Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA. Certification in Clinical-Pastoral Education.

2003 Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität and Goethe Institut, Munich, Germany, Summer Term.

1998 Karlstads Universitet, Karlstad, Sweden, Winter and Spring Term.

**Publications**

Books:

10. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Martin Luther*, co-edited with Paul R. Hinlicky, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 3 vols.; 2126 pp.

9. *Luther Refracted: The Reformer’s Ecumenical Legacy*, co-edited with Piotr Malysz (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015). 347 pp.

8. *One Hope: Re-Membering the Body of Christ*, co-authored with Martha Stortz, Jessica Wrobleski, et al. (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2015), 102 pp.

7. *Resilient Reformer: The Life and Thought of Martin Luther*, co-authored with Timothy F. Lull (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015). 441 pp.

6. *Readings in the History of Christian Theology, Vol.2: From the Reformation to the Postmodern World*, 2nd edition, by William C. Placher and Derek R. Nelson (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2016). Ca. 225 pp.

5. *Readings in the History of Christian Theology, Vol.1: From Its Beginnings to the Eve of the Reformation*, 2nd edition, ed. William C. Placher and Derek R. Nelson (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2015). 201 pp.

4. *A History of Christian Theology*, 2nd Edition, by William C. Placher and Derek R. Nelson (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2013). 352 pp.

Reviews: K.L. Hanson, *Choice* 51 no. 9 (2014), 1612; Kristen Largen, *Dialog:* 53 no. 4 (2014), 384-6.

3. *Theologians in Their Own Words*, eds. Derek R. Nelson, Ted Peters and Joshua M. Moritz (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013). 298 pp.

Reviews: Kristin Johnston Largen, *Dialog* 52 no. 2 (2013): 91-2; Matt Reynolds, *Christianity Today* 57 no. 3 (2013): 73; Don McKim, *Religious Studies Review* 39 no. 3 (2013) 157-8; Jacqueline Bussie, *Journal of Lutheran Ethics* 13 no. 6 (2013); Robert Brusic, *Word and World* 35:1 (2015), 97-100; William B. Shea, *Horizons* 41:2 (2014), 409-11., John Pless, *Logia* 22 no 4 (2014), 50-1; Robert Dahlen, *Lutheran Quarterly* 29 no 1 (2015), 109-11

2. *Sin: A Guide for the Perplexed* (New York and London: Continuum, 2011). 176 pp.

Reviews: Joshua Farris, *Scottish Journal of Theology* 67 no. 2 (2014): 234-6; Mark Mattes, *Lutheran Quarterly* 26 no. 3 (2012): 357-8.

1. *What’s Wrong with Sin: Sin in Individual and Social Perspective from Schleiermacher to Theologies of Liberation* (New York and London: T&T Clark, 2009). 210 pp.

Reviews: Brent Hege, *Interpretation* 66 no. 3 (2012): 337-8; Margaret Pfeil, *Theological Studies* 71 no. 4 (2010): 969-70; Tim Perry, *Theoforum* 43 no. 1 (2012): 187-8; Marit Trelstad, *Dialog* 52 no. 1 (2013): 70-3; Mark Medley, *Reviews in Religion and Theology* 18 no. 4 (2011): 548-50; Ryan Cumming, *Journal of Lutheran Ethics* 11 no. 9 (2011).

Articles and Essays in Books:

27. “Interpreting the Apostles Creed,” in *By Heart: Conversations with Martin Luther’s Small Catechism* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017).

26. “Law in Doctrine and Life according to Luther: Unity, Reciprocity, and Narrative” with Risto Saarinen, in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Martin Luther* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

25. “Portrayals of Luther: Dis-membering and Re-membering the Reformer in Literature, Theatre and Biography” in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Martin Luther* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

24. “What the Reformation Meant to Tillich” in *Bulletin of Paul Tillich Society* 42:3 (2016): 21-29.

23. “Light of the World,” in *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*, ed. Christine Helmer, et al., (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), forthcoming.

22. “Reformation and Eco-Reformation: Works Righteousness in the Environmental Movement,” co-authored with Robert C. Saler in *Dialog: A Journal of Theology*, 55:2 (2016): 141-6..

21. “North America’s Cool Reception of Scandinavian Creation Theology,” in Niels-Henrik Gregersen, Bengt Uggla, and Trygve Wyller, eds., *Scandinavian Creation Theology* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht), 2016.

20. “Human and Divine Justice in America’s Criminal Justice System,” in *Lutheran Forum* 49:2 (2015): 51-55.

19. “Justification, Self-Justification, and Forgiveness,” in Adam Pryor and Carol Jacobson, eds., *Remembering God’s Future* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), forthcoming.

18. “The Cautions of Justice: Jüngel's Engagement with Politics and the State” in R. David Nelson, ed., *Indicative of Grace: Essays in Honor of Eberhard Jüngel in His Eightieth Year* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 189-203.

17. Enhancements for e-textbook, *History of Christianity*, ed. Tim Dowley, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), chapters 22-43

16. “The Speaking That Silence Is,” in *Dialog: A Journal of Theology*, 52:4 (2013), 332-339.

15. Guest editor, Theology and Criminal Justice, Summer 2013 issue of *Dialog: A Journal of Theology*, including contribution, “With Liberty and Some Justice for a Few: Thinking Theologically about Criminal Justice.”

14. “Kierkegaard on Grace,” in Steven Emmanuel, William McDonald, and Jon Stewart, eds., *Kierkegaard’s Concepts* : *Tome III, Envy to Incognito* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2014), 119-26.

13. “Prayer as Invocation and Vocation in Kierkegaard,” in Steven Emmanuel, William McDonald, and Jon Stewart, eds., *Kierkegaard’s Concepts* , *Tome IV* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2015), 107-13.

12. “The Logic of Punishment and the Ethics of Sentencing,” in *Journal of Lutheran Ethics*.11:5 (2011).

11. “Problematizing ‘Conscience’ in Modern Protestant Thought,” in *Journal of Lutheran Ethics* 10:11 [November 2010].

10. “Unity, Ecumenicity and Difference in the Augustana Synod,” in *Lutheran Quarterly* 24:1 [2010], 76-96.

9. “Charles Finney and John Nevin on Selfhood and Sin: Reformed Anthropologies in 19th Century American Religion,” in *Calvin Theological Journal*, 46:1 [2010], 301-27.

8. “Ritschl and Schleiermacher on Social and Individual Sin,” in *Zeitschrift für Neuere Theologiegeschichte* 16:2 [2009], 131-54.

7. “Gerhard Ebeling’s Critical Appropriation of Kierkegaard,” in Jon Stewart, ed., *Kierkegaard’s Influence on Theology*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2012), 97-111.

6. “Inquiry, Conversation and Belief: William James and Richard Rorty Get Religion,” *Heythrop Journal* 50:3 [May 2009], 495-507.

5. “Theological Themes in Criminal Justice,” in *Journal of Lutheran Ethics* 9:9 [September 2009].

4. “Sins of Commission, Sins of Omission: Girard, Ricoeur and the Armenian Genocide,” in *The Evolution of Evil*, ed. Robert John Russell, Martinez Hewlett, Ted Peters, and Gaymon Bennett, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2008), 318-33.

3. “Encountering the World’s Religions: Nathan Söderblom and the Concept of Revelation,” *Dialog* 46:4 [2007], 362-70.

2. “The Vulnerable and Transcendent God: The Postliberal Theology of William Placher,” *Dialog* 44:3 [2005], 273-84.

1. “The Indicative of Grace, the Imperative of Freedom: An Invitation to the Theology of Eberhard Jüngel,” *Dialog* 44:2 [2005], 164-80.

Reviews (selected):

16. Review of Michael Peppard, *The Son of God in the Roman World: Divine Sonship in Its Social and Political Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012) in *Reviews in Religion and Theology*, forthcoming.

15. Review of Piotr Małysz, *Trinity, Freedom and Love: An Engagement with the Theology of Eberhard Jüngel* (London: T and T Clark, 2012), in *Reviews in Religion and Theology*.

14. Review of Veli-Matti Kärkkainen, Christ and Reconciliation: A Constructive Theology for the Pluralistic World (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), in *Dialog: A Journal of Theology*.

13. Review of Ann Käfer, *Inkarnation und Schöpfung: Schöpfungstheologische Voraussetzungen und Implikationen der Christologie bei Luther, Schleiermacher und Karl Barth*, in *Lutheran Quarterly* 25:2 [2012], 356-9.

12. Review of Michael Weinrich and John P. Burgess, eds., *What is Justification About? Reformed Contributions to an Ecumenical Theme* (Grand Rapds: Eerdmans, 2009), in *Dialog: A Journal of Theology*, 51:2 [2012], 174-6.

11. Review of Berndt Hamm and Michael Welker, *Die Reformation: Potentiale der Freiheit* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), in *Sixteenth Century Journal* 40:3 [2009], 260-2.

10. Review of Willem B. Drees, Hubert Meisinger and Taede Smedes, eds., *Creation’s Diversity: Voices from Science and Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2008), in *Reviews in Religion and Theology*, 16:3 [2009], 417-9.

9. Review of Tim Grass, *Modern Church History* (London: SCM, 2008), in *Reviews in Religion and Theology* 17:1 (2010), 32-4..

8. Review of John F. Haught, *God and the New Atheism: A Critical Response to Dawkins, Harris, and Hitchens* (Louisville: WJKP, 2008), in *Theology and Science* 6:3 [2008].

7. Review of Samuel Torvend, *Luther and the Hungry Poor: Gathered Fragments*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), in *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 39:4 [2008].

6. Review of Robert Kolb and Charles P. Arand, *The Genius of Luther’s Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), in *Sixteenth Century Journal* 39:3 [2008].

5. Review of David Bentley Hart, *The Doors of the Sea: Where Was God in the Tsunami?*, in *Dialog*, 48:4 [2009], 394-6.

4. Review of Deanna Thompson, *Crossing the Divide: Luther, Feminism and the Cross*, in *Christus Lux*, 1:1 (Winter 2006), 64-8.

3. Review of Hans Schwarz, *Creation*, in *Theology and Science* 4:2 [2006], 203-5.

2. Review of Harvey Cox, *When Jesus Came to Harvard: Making Moral Choices Today* in *Teaching Theology and Religion* 9:1 [January 2006], 63-5.

1. Review of Robert W. Jenson, *On Thinking the Human: Resolutions of Difficult Notions*, in *Dialog* 45:1 [2005], 110-12.

**Presentations and Addresses**

22. Luther Colloquy, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, Oct. 2017

21. Hoffman Lecture, West Virginia University; April 2017.

20. “New Directions in Reformation Research” at *Kongress für Lutherforschung*, Wittenberg, Germany, August 2017.

19. “Paterfamilias and the Reformation of German Families,” at Convocation of Teaching Theologians, Gustavus Adolphus College, July 2016.

18. “Family Life in Reformation Theology,” at LPFC, Indianapolis, Indiana, May 2016.

17. “The Meaning of the Lutheran Reformation for Paul Tillich,” at American Academy of Religion Conference, Atlanta Georgia, November 2015.

16. “Adaptive Leadership,” at Rostered Leaders Gathering, Indiana-Kentucky Synod of ELCA, Clifty Falls, IN, Oct. 2015

15. “Criminal Justice and Christian Faith” Krost Symposium, Texas Lutheran University, October 2012.

14. “Finding Torah Hidden in Law: Luther on God’s Mandates to Israel,” American Academy of Religion Conference, Martin Luther and Global Lutheran Traditions Consultation, San Francisco, CA, Nov. 2011.

13. “The Absolute, The Relative, and *Dynamics of Faith*.” American Academy of Religion Conference, Tillich: Issues in Religion, Theology and Culture Group, San Francisco, CA, Nov. 2011.

12. “The Human Person in Post-Reformation Theology.” Invited Lecture, Yale Divinity School, New Haven, CT, March 2011.

11. “Religious Studies and ‘The Dumbest Generation.’” Presentation at Teaching Religion Consultation, American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA, Nov. 2010.

10. “Presuppositions of Punishment.” Invited lecture, Roanoke College, Salem, VA. Feb. 2010

9. Keynote presentations, Bishop’s Fall Theological Conference, Northwest Pennsylvania Synod Rostered Leaders Gathering. Oct. 2009

8. “Education for a Global Future,” Honors Convocation Keynote address, Thiel College, October 2008.

7. Commencement Address, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, CA, May 2008.

6. “Theology of the Ministry of the Laity in Roman Catholic and Lutheran Perspectives,” St. Michael’s Church, Greenville, PA, April 2008.

5. “Terrorism, Pacifism and the Culture of War,” International Conference at Bethany College, Bethany, WV, October 2007. Presentation on behalf of Thiel Global Institute.

4. Invited Presenter, “Separating Private Theologies from Public Ethics?” for the Working Group on Christian Theologies of World Religions, Church Divinity School of the Pacific, October 2006.

3. Respondent, Fall Theology Conference, San Francisco Theological Seminary, November 2004.

2. Invited Respondent, “Report from Aarhus” Conference, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, February 2003.

1. Invited Lecture Series: “Reformation History and Theology for Today,” Fairfield University, Fairfield CT, February-March 2000.

Hundreds of other presentations at various churches and community events.

**Major Grants Awarded**

Continuing Support for Wabash Pastoral Leadership Program: $1,747,070.00 from Lilly Endowment, 2016.

Supplemental Grant, Wabash Early Career Pastoral Leadership Development Initiative: $525,000.00, Lilly Endowment, 2015.

Support for Wabash Early Career Pastoral Leadership Development Initiative: $500,000.00, Lilly Endowment, 2013.

Support for Wabash Pastoral Leadership Program, $1,570,231.00 from Lilly Endowment, 2012.

**Academic Honors and Awards**

Fellow, St Cross College, Oxford University 2012-13. In residence for Trinity Term, 2013.

Lilly Endowment Grant, to fund program on Lutheran traditions in higher education at Thiel. 2011-12.

Rowley Endowment Award, 2011, to fund exploratory trip for planning Germany immersion trip.

Manuscript Reviewer: Fortress Press, Continuum Press, Concordia Publishing, Routledge, Palgrave Macmillan, Oxford University Press.

Article Reviewer: *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, *Scottish Journal of Theology*, *Lutheran Quarterly*

Elected Member, Editorial Council, *Dialog: A Journal of Theology*, 2010-present

Scholar of the Year, Thiel College, 2008-9.

Lambda Sigma Honorary Society “Professor of the Year” award, Thiel College, 2006-7.

Distinction (Highest Honors) on Comprehensive Exams (doctoral).

Grant for Advanced Study, Ev. Lutheran Church in America, 2002-2005 (awarded 3 times).

Summer Research Fellowship, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, 2003.

Newhall Research Fellowship, Graduate Theological Union, 2003.

Presidential Fellow, Graduate Theological Union, 2002-5.

Dwight-Hooker Prize for Theology, Yale University Divinity School, 2002.

Graduate Fellowship, Lambda Chi Alpha Educational Foundation, 2000.

Holmer Scholarship, Yale University Divinity School, 1999-2002

Harrison Essay Prize, Wabash College, 1999.

Mills Prize in Religion, Wabash College, 1999.

Honor Scholar, Wabash College, 1995-1999.

**Service**

To Wabash College:

Religion Department Chair

Graduate Fellowships Committee

Honorary Degree Committee

Committee on College Life, Board of Trustees

Director of Pastoral Leadership Program, funded by Lilly Endowment

Faculty Advisor to Lambda Chi Alpha Fraternity

Steering Committee, Newcomers Club

Lecture and Film Committee

Community Service Committee

Adviser to Scroll: Youth Theology Institute at Wabash College

To Thiel College:

Co-chair, Enrollment Management Committee.

Chair, Curriculum Revision Task Force.

Member, *Thiel 2016* Strategic Plan Committee.

Steering Committee, *Imagining Thiel* strategic planning process.

Faculty Representative to Board of Trustees, 5/2011 – 7/2012.

Co-coordinator, Community Experiences program of Thiel Community Building Initiative, 2008-11.

Co-Director, Thiel Global Institute, 2007-12. Interdisciplinary programming institute centered on initiatives related to sustainability and globalization.

Search Committee Member, Thiel College presidency search, 2007-2009.

Center for Learning and Advising Advisory Committee member, 2007-2010.

Institutional Planning and Budgeting Committee member, 2008-2010.

Housing Allocation Committee, 2007-11.

Faculty advisor to Men’s Leadership program.

First-year program participant and Orientation leader.

Academic advisor for dozens of Thiel students.

To the Church:

Dean of Lafayette Conference/Ministerium, 2016- present

Member, ELCA task force for a Social Statement on Criminal Justice, 2008-2013.

Campus Pastor, Thiel College, 12/2009 – 7/2011.

Interim Pastor, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Greenville, PA, 8/2009-4/2011.

Interim Pastor, Twelve Apostles Lutheran Church, Saegertown, PA, 2008-9.

Vicar, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Greenville, PA, 2007-8.

Vocations (Candidacy) Committee, NW PA Synod, 2010-12.

Ecumenical Relations Committee, NW Pennsylvania Synod, 2007-12.

Committee on Church Vocations: NW Pennsylvania Synod, 2011-12.

Youth Minister, Bethesda Lutheran Church, New Haven, CT, 2000-2.

Campus Ministry Committee, Indiana-Kentucky Synod, ELCA.2013-present

To the Wider Community:

Member, Shenango River Watchers Mercer County River Clean-up grant team, 2008-2012.

Board Member, Community Medical Ethics Advisory Council, UPMC Horizon Hospital, 2007-2012.

**Administrative Experience**

Department Chair, Thiel College, 2008-2012 (staff of six).

Department Chair, Wabash College, 2016-present (staff of six)

Director, Wabash Pastoral Leadership Program, 2012 - (staff of four)

Interim Pastor, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Greenville, PA 2009-11, (staff of eight)

**References**

Thomas A. Brady, Jr., Dept. of History, University of California, Berkeley; tabrady@berkeley.edu

David H. Kelsey, Yale Divinity School, New Haven, CT 06520; david.kelsey@yale.edu

Rosemary Radford Ruether, Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, CA 94708; rruether@psr.edu

Niels-Henrik Gregersen, University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark; nhg@teol.ku.dk

Scott Feller, Dean, Wabash College, Crawfordsville, IN 47933; fellers@wabash.edu

Ted Peters, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, CA 94708; tedfpeters@gmail.com

**Languages**

English (native)

German (reading, writing, speaking)

Latin (reading)

French (reading)

Greek (*Koine*, reading)

Swedish (reading, speaking, writing)

Norwegian (reading)

Danish (reading)

**Personal**

Born: Cannon Falls, MN, 1977.

Married: Rev. Kelly L. Nelson, July 2009.

Family: Daughter, Madeleine Grace, b. 2014; Parents Rodney and Mary Nelson, Vasa, MN; one sister, Gretchen Jerskey, Andover, MN

Avocations: Furniture making, cooking, brewing, travel, gardening,

Ordained Minister, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, October 2008-present.

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