

## **Robert H. von Thaden, Jr.**

Mercyhurst University  
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### **EDUCATION**

- Ph.D. Emory University, New Testament & Early Christianity, 2007  
M.A. University of Chicago, Religious Studies, 1998  
B.A. Muhlenberg College, Religion/German, 1995 (*summa cum laude*)

### **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

**Professor of Religious Studies, Mercyhurst University, 2019-Present**

**Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Mercyhurst University, 2012-2019**

**Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, Mercyhurst University, 2006-2012**

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|----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Current Courses:     | What Is Religion?          | Sacred Texts                  |
|                      | Judaism                    | Christianity                  |
|                      | New Testament              | American Religion             |
|                      | Women & Scripture          | Death & Dying                 |
|                      | Apocalypse to Zombie       | Desert Mothers & Fathers      |
|                      | Religious Studies Seminar  | Senior Thesis                 |
| Past Courses:        | The Sacred & the Beautiful | Prophetic Traditions          |
|                      | Wisdom Literature          | Jesus the Christ              |
| Independent Studies: | New Testament Greek        | History of Interpretation     |
|                      | German for Reading         | Religion & the Justice System |

**Adjunct Instructor, Co-Instructor, Teaching Assistant and Associate, Emory University College, Department of Religion, 2002-2005**

- Courses: Qur'an and the Bible  
Introduction to Sacred Texts  
Comparing the Birth and Death of Jesus in Early Christian Literature and the Qur'an  
Paul and His Letters

**Adjunct Instructor, Teaching Assistant and Associate, Candler School of Theology, Emory University, 2000-2002, Spring 2005**

- Courses: Introduction to the New Testament I and II  
Introduction to Biblical Greek I and II  
Lexical Greek

**Faculty, Department of Religion, Seton Academy: A Catholic College Preparatory High School for Young Women; South Holland, IL, 1998-1999**

- Courses: Scripture  
Morality  
Peace and Justice

## AREAS OF TEACHING COMPETENCE

**Primary:** Biblical Studies; History of Christianity; Apocalyptic Ideology; Jewish, Greek, and Roman Contexts; New Testament Theology; Methods and History of Biblical Interpretation

**Secondary:** Comparative Sacred Texts; American Religion; Death & Dying

## PUBLICATIONS

### BOOKS

Vernon K. Robbins, Robert H. von Thaden Jr., & Bart B. Bruehler, eds. *Foundations for Sociorhetorical Exploration: A Rhetoric of Religious Antiquity Reader*. Rhetoric of Religious Antiquity 4. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016.

*Sex, Christ, and Embodied Cognition: Paul's Wisdom for Corinth*. Emory Studies in Early Christianity 16. Blandford Forum, Dorset, UK: Deo Publishing, 2012. Repr. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017.

### ARTICLES/ESSAYS

"Response to 'Mental Images, Embodied Experience, and Textual Rhetoric' Panel." *Conversations with the Biblical World: A Peer-Reviewed Journal of Studies of the Archeology, Culture, History, and Literature of the Bible and the Ancient Near East* 39 (2019): 224-230.

"Procreation, Children, and Family." Pages 539-56 in *The Handbook of New Testament, Gender, and Sexuality*. Edited by Benjamin H. Dunning. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.

"Apocalyptic America: Buying the End Time." Pages 405-37 in *Apocalypses in Context: Apocalyptic Currents Throughout History*. Edited by Kelly J. Murphy and Justin P. Jeffcoat Schedtler. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016.

"Digging Down and Reaching Out: A Story of Biblical Scholarship in the Twenty-First Century." *Expositions: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities* 9 (2015): 106-113.

"Pauline Rhetorical Invention: Seeing 1 Corinthians 6:12-7:7 through Conceptual Integration Theory." Pages 99-119 in *Cognitive Linguistic Explorations in Biblical Studies*. Edited by Bonnie G. Howe and Joel B. Green. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2014.

"The Power of Pictures: Sex and Embodied Temples." *Conversations with the Biblical World: Proceedings of the Eastern Great Lakes Biblical Society & Midwest Region Society of Biblical Literature* 32 (2012): 109-126.

"Guiding Socio-Rhetorical Commentary with Conceptual Integration Theory (Blending Theory)." *Conversations with the Biblical World: Proceedings of the Eastern Great Lakes Biblical Society & Midwest Region Society of Biblical Literature* 31 (2011): 184-203.

"Bad Children, Children as Bad: Problematic Children from Proverbs to *Acts of Thomas* and Beyond." *Proceedings: Eastern Great Lakes and Midwestern Biblical Societies* 28 (2008): 67-75.

"Glorify God in Your Body: The Redemptive Role of the Body in Early Christian Ascetic Literature." *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 38 (2003): 191-209.

## ENCYCLOPEDIA/DICTIONARY ENTRIES

“Children in the New Testament,” n.p. Bible Odyssey (2018). Online:

<https://www.bibleodyssey.org/443/passages/related-articles/children-in-the-new-testament>

“Sexual Immorality (Word Study),” n.p. Bible Odyssey (2023). Online:

<https://bibleodyssey.org/passages/related-articles/sexual-immorality/>

## BOOK REVIEWS

J. Jesse Ramírez. *Un-American Dreams: Apocalyptic Science Fiction, Disimagined Community, and Bad Hope in the American Century* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2024) in *Theology and Literature* 11 June 2025.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/litthe/fraf013>

Aleksander Gomola. *Conceptual Blending in Early Christian Discourse: A Cognitive Linguistic Analysis of Pastoral Metaphors in Patristic Literature* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2018) in *Review of Biblical Literature* 04/2019.

[https://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/12310\\_13728.pdf](https://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/12310_13728.pdf)

Nicole L. Tilford. *Sensing World, Sensing Wisdom: The Cognitive Foundation of Biblical Metaphors* (Ancient Israel and Its Literature 31; SBL Press, 2017) in *Review of Biblical Literature* 02/2018.

[https://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/11676\\_13014.pdf](https://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/11676_13014.pdf)

Frederick S. Tappenden. *Resurrection in Paul: Cognition, Metaphor, and Transformation* (Early Christianity and Its Literature 19; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016) in *Review of Biblical Literature* 12/2017.

[https://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/11335\\_12617.pdf](https://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/11335_12617.pdf)

Rebecca Solevåg. *Birthing Salvation: Gender and Class in Early Christian Childbearing Discourse* (Biblical Interpretation Series 121; Boston: Brill, 2013) in *Theology and Sexuality* 21:2 (2016): 144-46.

Sharon Betsworth. *Children in Early Christian Narratives* (Library of New Testament Studies 521; London: T&T Clark) in *Review of Biblical Literature* 07/2016.

[https://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/10427\\_11579.pdf](https://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/10427_11579.pdf)

David W. Chapman. *Ancient Jewish and Christian Perceptions of Crucifixion* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2008) in *Religious Studies Review* 37 (2011): 280.

Benjamin H. Dunning. *Specters of Paul: Sexual Difference in Early Christian Thought* (Divinations: Reading Late Ancient Religion; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011) in *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, 2011.09.18.

<http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2011/2011-09-18.html>

Lynn R. Huber. *Like a Bride Adorned: Reading Metaphor in John's Apocalypse* (Emory Studies in Early Christianity 12; New York: T & T Clark, 2007) in *Biblical Interpretation* 18 (2010): 170-71.

## EDITORIAL/REVIEW WORK

New Testament/Christian Origins Field Editor: *Advances in Ancient, Biblical, and Near Eastern*

*Research, 2019-Present.*

Associate Editor: *Emory Studies in Early Christianity*. Atlanta: SBL Press. Volumes 13 and following.

New Testament Editor: *Conversations with the Biblical World: Proceedings of the Eastern Great Lakes Biblical Society & Midwest Region Society of Biblical Literature*, 2018-2023.

Peer Reviewer: *Anselm Academic Study Bible*. Winona, Minn.: Anselm Academic, 2013.

## **ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS**

### **NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS**

“‘We Will All Be Changed’: Apocalyptic Transformation of Christ Believing Bodies.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature. Denver, CO. November 20, 2018.

“Rhetorical Children in Galatians: Metaphor, Affect, and Persuasion.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the European Association of Biblical Studies. Helsinki, Finland. July 31, 2018.

“Families, Children, and *Askesis*: Framing Christ-Believing Bodies.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature. Atlanta, GA. November 2015.

“Temple Children: Children, Sex, and the Rhetoric of Sacred Space.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature. San Diego, CA. November 25, 2014.

“The Power of Pictures: The Somatic Power of Temple Images.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature. San Diego, CA. November 24, 2014.

“A Cognitive Turn: Conceptual Blending in a Socio-Rhetorical Framework.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature. Chicago, IL. November 19, 2012.

“Paul’s Blended Rhetoric: Apocalyptic Wisdom in 1 Corinthians.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature. Chicago, IL. November 18, 2012.

“Fleeing Sin: Embodied Conceptual Blends in 1 Corinthians.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature. Atlanta, GA. November 21, 2010.

“Embodied Minds in Physical Space: ‘Coming Together’ in Paul’s Corinthian Community.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research. Atlanta, GA. November 18, 2010.

“Pauline Rhetorical Invention: Seeing 1 Cor 6:12-7:7 through Conceptual Integration Theory.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature. Boston, MA, November 25, 2008.

“Thinking with Children: Children as Conceptual Characters in Wisdom Traditions.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature. Boston, MA, November 23, 2008.

“Biblical Scholars in the American Academy of Religion: Exploring Early Christianities as Conceptual

Religious Systems.” Presentation for the Rethinking the Field Roundtable, “Past, Present, Other: Rethinking the Study of Ancient Religion,” of the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion. Chicago, IL, November 3, 2008.

“Thinking with Women: The Cognitive Power of Female Rhetography.” Paper presented at the annual meetings of the American Academy of Religion and Society of Biblical Literature. San Diego, CA, November 19, 2007.

“The Importance of Conceptual Blending for the RRA Project: Theory and Examples,” with L. Gregory Bloomquist. Presented at the Rhetoric of Religious Antiquity Series Working Session. Ottawa, ON, June 16, 2007.

“A Blended Tapestry: Seeing 1 Cor 6:12-20 through Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation.” Paper presented at the annual meetings of the American Academy of Religion and Society of Biblical Literature. Washington, D.C., November 20, 2006.

## REGIONAL MEETINGS

“Arguing with Children: Rhetorical Characters in Early Christian Literature.” Presidential Address presented to the Eastern Great Lakes Biblical Society. Akron, OH. March 16, 2017.

“Think of the Children! Rhetorical Force of Child Imagery in Galatians 4.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Eastern Great Lakes Biblical Society. Perrysville, OH. March 13, 2015.

“The Power of Pictures: Sex and Embodied Temples.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Eastern Great Lakes Biblical Society. Richfield, OH. March 23, 2012.

“The Importance of Conceptual Blending for Socio-Rhetorical Commentary.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Eastern Great Lakes Biblical Society. Richfield, OH. April 1, 2011.

“Frustrated Desire in the Classroom: Or, ‘Will this be on the Test?’” Presentation for the Pedagogy in Teaching Religion Panel of the Pacific Northwest Regional Meeting of the American Academy of Religion. Tacoma, WA, April 25, 2009.

“Thinking about Thinking: Cognitive Science of Religion as Conversation Starter.” Paper presented at the Pacific Northwest Regional Meeting of the American Academy of Religion. Tacoma, WA, April 24, 2009.

“Bad Children, Children as Bad: Problematic Children from Proverbs to *Acts of Thomas* and Beyond.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Eastern Great Lakes Biblical Society. Perrysville, OH, April 3, 2008.

“The Use and Abuse of the Pauline Whore: Ideological Texture and the Ethics of Reading.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Eastern Great Lakes Biblical Society. Mount Sterling, OH, April 12, 2007. [**Winner of a 2008 Society of Biblical Literature Regional Scholar Award**]

“The Blending of Apocalyptic and Wisdom Rhetorolects in 1 Corinthians 1-4.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Southeastern Region of the American Academy of Religion and Society of Biblical Literature. Atlanta, GA, March 10, 2006.

## **HONORS AND FELLOWSHIPS**

- Mercyhurst University Teaching Excellence Award, 2022
- Mercyhurst University Research Fellow, 2013-2016
- Mercyhurst University Faculty Research Contracts, 2008-2009; 2009-2010; 2012-2013
- 2008 Society of Biblical Literature Regional Scholar Award
- Robert W. Woodruff Library Graduate Fellowship, Emory Center for Interactive Teaching, 2005-2006
- Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Dissertation Fellowship, Emory University, 2004-2005
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Educational Grant, 2002-2004
- John Fenton Prize in the Comparative Study of Religion, 2003
- Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Fellowship, Emory University, 1999-2003
- Phi Beta Kappa, Muhlenberg College, 1994

## **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

- Society of Biblical Literature
- Sheffield Institute for Interdisciplinary Biblical Studies (External Member)
- Catholic Biblical Association of America
- North American Patristics Society
- North American Society for the Study of Christian Apocryphal Literature

## **LANGUAGES**

Biblical Greek, Classical Hebrew, German, French (reading)

## **SERVICE**

- Chair: Academic Policies Committee, Mercyhurst University, 2025-2026
- Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate, Mercyhurst University, 2024-2025
- Chair: Mercyhurst University Faculty Affairs Committee, 2023-2024
- Program Evaluation and Assessment Committee, 2022-2023
- Mercyhurst University Contract Committee, 2020-2021; 2021-2022; 2022-2023
- Co-Chair: Rhetoric of Religious Antiquity seminar of the Society of Biblical Literature, 2017-2022
- Chair: Religious Studies Department, Mercyhurst University, 2015-2021
- Mercyhurst University Compensation Committee, 2017-2020
- Academic Planning and Assessment Committee, Mercyhurst University, 2018-2019
- President: Eastern Great Lakes Biblical Society, 2016-2017
- Chair: Cognitive Linguistics in Biblical Studies section of the Society of Biblical Literature, 2012-2017
- Vice President/President Elect: Eastern Great Lakes Biblical Society, 2015-2016
- Steering Committee Member: Rhetoric of Religious Antiquity group of the Society of Biblical Literature, 2010-2016
- Treasurer: Eastern Great Lakes Biblical Society, 2012-2015
- Vice President of the Faculty Senate, Mercyhurst University, 2010-2012, 2012-2014
- Steering Committee Member: Cognitive Linguistics and Biblical Studies section of the Society of Biblical Literature, 2010-2012.
- Middle States Steering Committee, Mercyhurst University, 2010-2013
- Chair of Faculty Sub-committee for Middle States, Mercyhurst College, 2010-2013
- Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate, Mercyhurst College, 2009-2010
- Chair, Faculty Handbook Committee, Mercyhurst College, 2008-2010
- Co-chair, Faculty Research Committee, Mercyhurst College, 2007-2009
- Faculty Handbook Committee, Mercyhurst College, 2007-2008
- Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Team, Mercyhurst College, 2007-2008

- Mercyhurst College Honors Program Selection Committee, Spring 2007; Spring 2008
- Strategic Vision Ad-Hoc Faculty Response Committee, Mercyhurst College, Fall 2007
- Network Printing Services, Request for Proposal Faculty Team Leader, Mercyhurst College, 2007-2008
- Presentation for Political Science Club, “God and the State: Biblical Traditions and the American Political Context,” Fall 2007
- Reader for Honors Thesis in History, Mercyhurst College, Spring 2007

#### **ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL AND COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE**

- Invited Speaker, Wayside Presbyterian Church; Erie, PA: “Judeophobia: Making Christians by Othering Jews,” September 14, 2025.
- Adult Formation, Erie Episcopal; Erie, PA: “Conversing with the Gospel of Mark,” December 10 & 17, 2024.
- Invited Speaker, Wayside Presbyterian Church; Erie, PA: “Religion & the Republic: Navigating Messy Categories Since the Founding,” September 8, 2024.
- Invited Speaker, Wayside Presbyterian Church; Erie, PA: “American Revelations: Joseph Smith, the Restored Gospel, & the Emergence of Latter-Day Traditions,” April 7, 2024.
- Invited Speaker, Our Lady of Mercy Roman Catholic Church, Harborcreek, PA: “American Revelations: Joseph Smith, the Restored Gospel, & the Emergence of Latter-Day Traditions,” February 28, 2024.
- Invited Speaker, Wayside Presbyterian Church; Erie, PA: “Healing Creation: Eschatological Hope in Early Christianity,” September 10, 2023.
- Adult Formation, Erie Episcopal; Erie, PA: “Apocalypse for Advent,” November 29-December 20, 2022.
- Invited Speaker, Wayside Presbyterian Church; Erie, PA: “Black Religious Creativity in White Supremacist America,” September 11, 2022.
- Invited Speaker, Wayside Presbyterian Church; Erie, PA: “Reformation(s): Latin Christianity in a Modernist Key,” October 31, 2021.
- Invited Speaker, Wayside Presbyterian Church; Erie, PA: “Religion, Popular Culture, and the End of the World,” September 12, 2021.
- Invited Speaker, Our Lady of Mercy Roman Catholic Church, Harborcreek, PA: “Fighting about Jesus: Truly God & Truly Human, But How?” March 17, 2021
- Invited Speaker, Wayside Presbyterian Church; Erie, PA: “Apocalypse and Empire,” October 4, 2020.
- Invited Speaker, Wayside Presbyterian Church; Erie, PA: “Ethnicity and the Christ Movement,” December 1, 2019 .
- Invited Speaker, Wayside Presbyterian Church; Erie, PA: “Children in the Biblical World,” January 20, 2019.
- Invited Speaker, Wayside Presbyterian Church; Erie, PA: “Blackness in Antiquity,” November 4, 2018.
- Invited Speaker, Wayside Presbyterian Church; Erie, PA: “Desert Spirituality,” February 11, 2018.
- Invited Speaker, Wayside Presbyterian Church; Erie, PA: “White Supremacy and the Bible,” October 8, 2017
- Invited Speaker, Wayside Presbyterian Church; Erie, PA: “Rethinking the Reformation,” February 26, 2017.
- Invited Speaker, Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwest Pennsylvania; Erie, PA: “Women in Biblical Memory,” October 29, 2016.
- Invited Speaker, Wayside Presbyterian Church; Erie, PA: “Creation in Biblical Traditions,” a two part series. September 18 and 25, 2016.
- Dean’s Forum, Episcopal Cathedral of St. Paul; Erie, PA: “What’s It All Coming To? Apocalyptic America,” December, 6, 2015.
- Invited Speaker, Wayside Presbyterian Church; Erie, PA: “Paul’s Letter to the Romans: Jews, Gentiles, and the Law,” January 11, 2015.

- Invited Speaker, Wayside Presbyterian Church; Erie, PA: “Paul and His Problematic Children: The Corinthian Correspondence,” a two part series. December 7 and 14, 2014
- Invited Speaker, Wayside Presbyterian Church; Erie, PA: “The Advent of New Life: End Times in the Book of Revelation,” a two part series. December 8 and 15, 2013.
- Keynote Speaker and Preacher, Wayside Presbyterian Church; Erie, PA: Fall Convocation. “The Importance of Memory: Jesus in Text and Tradition.” October 13-14, 2012.
- Invited Speaker, Wayside Presbyterian Church; Erie, PA: “Different Theological Stories: The Birth of Jesus in Matthew and Luke,” December 11, 2011 and January 22, 2012.
  - Part 1: “Recapitulating Israelite History: Matthew’s Baby Jesus”
  - Part 2: “The Marginalized Prophet: Luke’s Baby Jesus”
- Invited Speaker, Our Lady of Mercy Roman Catholic Church, Harborcreek, PA: “The Word Made Flesh: The Distinctive Voice of the Fourth Gospel,” March 23, 2011.
- Invited Speaker, Wayside Presbyterian Church; Erie, PA: “Making Meaning Out of Fear: The Apocalypse of John,” October 24 and 31, 2010.
  - Part 1: “Setting the Book of Revelation in Its Context”
  - Part 2: “Visions, Beasts, and the End”
- Invited Speaker, Wayside Presbyterian Church; Erie, PA: “Encountering Mark,” April 11, 18, 25, 2010.
  - Part 1: “The Messianic Secret: Taking the Second Gospel on Its Own Terms”
  - Part 2: “It’s the End of the World as We Know It: The Apocalyptic Jesus of Mark”
  - Part 3: “Shaking His Fist at God: The Death of Jesus in Mark”
- Invited Speaker, Our Lady of Mercy Roman Catholic Church, Harborcreek, PA: “Theological Plurality: Last Supper Traditions in the Gospels,” March 3, 2010.
- Invited Speaker, Wayside Presbyterian Church; Erie, PA: “Thinking with Jesus: Putting the New Testament and the Qur’an in Conversation,” March 15, 2009.
- Guest Instructor, Middle School Education Program, Wayside Presbyterian Church; Erie, PA: “World Religions,” January 21, 2009.
- Invited Speaker, Wayside Presbyterian Church; Erie, PA: “Paul: The Radical Faith of a Messianic Jew,” November 9, 2008.
- Invited Speaker, St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church; Erie, PA: “Introducing Paul: A Man and His Letters,” October 9, 2008.
- Visiting Instructor for Adult Education, Episcopal Church of the Atonement; Atlanta, GA:
  - “God and the State: Biblical Traditions and the American Context,” January/February 2006
  - “The Origins and History of Prayer in the Christian Tradition,” February, 2005
  - “The Missional Church: Form and Function in the Early Christian Church,” September 2004
  - “Baptism in its Historical and Cultural Context,” March 2004
  - “The New Testament in its Cultural Context,” January 2003
- Visiting Instructor at the Florence Melton Adult Mini-School of Atlanta; a program of the Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta:
  - “An Introduction to New Testament Theologies for Adult Jewish Learners,” November, 2005
- Research Assistant for Dr. Vernon K. Robbins, Emory University, 2001-2005

## REFERENCES

Available upon request.