

Who is . . .

*Mark
Allan
Powell?*



Dr. Mark Allan Powell is an internationally known theologian and Bible scholar.

- Professor of New Testament at Trinity Lutheran Seminary (Columbus, Ohio)
- Author of over 25 books and 100 published articles on theology and Bible

He has served as

- Chair of The Historical Jesus Section of the Society of Biblical Literature
- Chair of The Matthew Group for the Society of Biblical Literature
- General Editor of the *Harper Collins Bible Dictionary*
- Editor of *Academia Biblica*, the Society of Biblical Literature's Dissertation Series
- Founding Editor of *The Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus*
- Associate Editor of *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
- Member of the Executive Committee of the Catholic Biblical Association

Dr. Powell is an ordained minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, but he has also held invited lectureships internationally at schools in Estonia, Tanzania, and Russia, as well as at such American universities as Berkeley and the University of Chicago.

In addition to his academic works, Powell has produced voluminous materials for churches including biblical commentaries, preaching guides, Sunday School curricula and devotional materials.

As an academic scholar, he remains best known for his work in three areas:

- : *Literary Criticism*: Powell has done groundbreaking work with regard to understanding the Bible as literature and using methods derived from modern literary criticism to enhance biblical interpretation. He was a principal architect in the development of “narrative criticism” in biblical studies and his book *What Is Narrative Criticism?* is still viewed as a standard work for introducing students to this exegetical method.

- *Matthean Studies*: Powell is recognized as a leading scholar in the study of the Gospel of Matthew. He is author of the Harper-Collins commentary on Matthew and has written several other books and articles focusing on the first Gospel. For ten years, he served as Chair of The Matthew Group for the Society of Biblical Literature. He has signed a contract with Eerdmans to produce a comprehensive critical commentary on Matthew by 2018.
- *Historical Jesus Studies*: Powell has been a primary researcher in the scholarly discipline of understanding Jesus as a figure in world history and is the author of a widely used text book on this subject. He served for eight years as chair of the Society of Biblical Literature's primary study group devoted to this topic.

His current academic project involves serving as General Editor for the forthcoming third edition of the *HarperCollins Bible Dictionary*, the world's best-selling dictionary of the Bible. In recent years, Powell has become a popular writer and speaker in the areas of spiritual formation and Christian spirituality. His books *Loving Jesus* and *Giving To God* are addressed to laity and offer semi-autobiographical guidance for discipleship in these vital areas of the Christian life.

Powell—who began his journalistic career in the '70s as a rock critic for *The Houston Post*—is also regarded as a leading expert on the subject of “contemporary Christian music.” He has published over 1900 reviews and articles on popular music in general and is the author of a 1000-page encyclopedia on Christian pop artists.

Awards and Recognitions

In 2009, Powell was asked to serve as one of the Hein-Fry lectures for the ELCA. The Hein-Fry lectureship is the denomination's premier national event in which recognized scholars are invited to address the church on issues of theological significance.

In 1999, Powell was recipient of the Associated Press' Award of Excellence in Religious News (their first place award) and in both 2003 and 2006 he received their Award of Merit (second place). In 2000, he was honored by *Christian Century* for being the only author to have two volumes included in their annual list of the Top 50 Books in Religion. In 2003, his *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Christian Music* was chosen Book of the Year by ARSC, a society of American music historians.

In 1989, Dr. Powell received the Outstanding Graduate Award from his alma mater, Texas Lutheran University.

Personal Information

Dr. Powell has served two parishes (in Pasadena, Texas and in Richmond, Virginia) as well as serving for a time as Campus Pastor at Virginia Commonwealth University. He is married to Melissa Curtis Powell, who is Director of Financial Aid at Trinity Lutheran Seminary. They have four children: David (age 28), Michael (age 26), Brandon (age 21), and Jillian (age 20). Also four cats: Cyrus, Cleopatra, Dylan, and Bonnie (ages unknown). And one turtle: Flagg (older than some of the children).

Books by Mark Allan Powell

- Forthcoming *Jesus as a Figure in History: Fully Revised and Expanded Second Edition.* Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011?
- 2010 *Harper Collins Bible Dictionary.* Revised Third Edition. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2010. General Editor.
- 2009 *Harper Collins Bible Dictionary.* Condensed Edition. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2009. Editor.
- 2009 *Introduction to the New Testament* (college textbook). Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009.
- 2009 *Methods for Matthew.* Cambridge Methods in Biblical Interpretation. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. Editor and co-author.
- 2008 *Opening the Book of Faith: Lutheran Insights for Bible Study.* Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2008. With Diane Jacobson and Stan Olson.
- 2007 *What Do They Hear?: How To Bridge the Gap Between Preacher and Pew.* Nashville: Abingdon, 2007
- 2005 *Giving To God: The Good News of Biblical Stewardship.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.
- 2004 *Loving Jesus.* Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004.
- 2002 *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Christian Music.* Boston: Hendrickson, 2002
- 2001 *Chasing the Eastern Star: Adventures in Biblical Reader-Response Criticism.* Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2001
- 2000 *Matthew.* The Harper-Collins Bible Commentary Series. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 2000.
- 1999 *Who Do You Say That I Am? Essays on New Testament Christology.* With David R. Bauer. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1999.
- The New Testament Today.* Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1999.
- The Jesus Debate: Modern Historians Investigate the Life of Christ.* Oxford: Lion Publishing Co., 1999 (European edition of 1998 work).
- 1998 *Mark: God's Grace in Action. Leader's Guide.* Inspire Series. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1998.
- Mark: God's Grace in Action. Participant Book.* Inspire Series. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1998.
- Jesus As A Figure in History: How Modern Historians View the Man from*

- Galilee*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1998.
- A Fortress Introduction to . . . The Gospels*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998.
- 1996 *Epiphany, Proclamation 6--Series B*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996.
- Treasures New and Old: Essays on the Gospel of Matthew*. With David R. Bauer. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996.
- 1995 *God With Us: A Pastoral Theology of Matthew's Gospel*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.
- 1993 *What Is Narrative Criticism? A New Approach to the Bible* (British edition of 1990 work, with foreword by N. T. Wright). London: SPCK, 1993.
- 1992 *The Bible and Modern Literary Criticism: A Critical Assessment and Annotated Bibliography*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1992.
- Advent/Christmas. Proclamation 5--Series A*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992.
- 1991 *What Are They Saying About Acts?* New York: Paulist Press, 1991.
- Witnesses to the Word: Mission 90 Bible Study/Witness*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1991. Editor and co-author.
- 1990 *What Is Narrative Criticism?* Guides to Biblical Scholarship Series. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990.
- 1989 *What Are They Saying About Luke?* New York: Paulist Press, 1989.

Quotes from Mark Allan Powell

- “Whether emanating from the lips of a tortured martyr or plastered above the tailpipe of an old grey Ford, the simple affirmation that “God is love” judges and trivializes all other attempts at making sense of our complicated existence. Knowing God and growing close to God begins and ends with this truth.”
- “Jesus is for losers! Sinners, tax-collectors, Samaritans, lepers . . . losers all! The neglected, the disadvantaged, the marginalized, the abused . . . he is *for* them, not against them. So we are proud to be included on any list of this world’s ‘losers’ – Jesus is for losers and we want nothing more than to be counted among the losers he is for.”
- “No matter how much you love theology, theology will never love you back. It will certainly never love you first. God does that. God loves us back. God loves us first.”
- “Martin Luther said that music was one of God’s greatest gifts. Actually, he thought it was the *second* best of God’s gifts, after theology. But then Luther had never heard the Beatles.”
- “The Bible does not emphasize a personal relationship with Jesus, but a corporate one: the Jesus of scripture does not want to come into your heart and become a part of your body; he wants to draw you to his heart and make you a part of his body.”
- “The promise of God, unlike any other warranty that I have ever known, is not voided by negligence or abuse. The promise of a new world holds even if what’s wrong with the old one turns out to be our fault.”
- At a seminary commencement address: “If you do not love the Lord, you will soon discover that being a pastor is really not a very good job. You will be underpaid, overworked, underappreciated, and overstressed. But if you do love the Lord you may discover, as so many of us have, that it can be the most wonderful job in the world.”

Fun Facts about Trinity Lutheran Seminary faculty: MARK ALLAN POWELL

Mark Allan Powell

- grew up in Texas and rode a horse to school as a child
- co-wrote three songs with folksinger Mimi Farina (sister of Joan Baez)
- placed fourth in state as a diver on his high school swim team
- worked as a lifeguard and even rescued someone (once)
- as a college student, wrote regularly for *Seventeen* magazine (under a pseudonym he no longer discloses)
- has four cats, including a Persian named Cyrus Zoroaster
- is an Eagle Boy Scout
- collects magi (from nativity sets—but *only* the magi, no one else)
- reads comic books, old and new. Favorites: 1940s *Superman*; 1960s *Fantastic Four*, 1980s *X-Men*; 1990s *Sandman*; 2000s *Fables*.
- once owned a garter snake that had 63 babies (most of them survived)
- is the brother of Wayne Powell, President of Lenoir Rhyne College in Hickory, North Carolina.