

ROGER OWENS: PASTOR-THEOLOGIAN

PROFESSOR BRINGS PREACHING AND PASTORAL LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE TO THE CLASSROOM

The Rev. Dr. L. Roger Owens' strong preaching and pastoral leadership experience enhance his effectiveness both as a seminal thinker in the area of spiritual formation and as associate professor of leadership and ministry at Pittsburgh Seminary. An ordained elder in the United Methodist Church, Roger, along with his wife, the Rev. Ginger Thomas, co-pastored urban and rural churches in North Carolina for eight years before coming to PTS last fall. At Duke Memorial UMC, Roger filled the role of preaching pastor and Ginger that of congregational pastor.



With a master of divinity and a doctorate from Duke, Roger teaches in the areas of homiletics, pastoral arts, pastoral theology—and his special focus, Christian spirituality. Witness the titles of two of his four books: *Abba, Give Me a Word: The Path of Spiritual Direction* (described as “a wise introduction to an ancient art and practice of ‘soul care’ directed at Christians of all backgrounds”) and *Wendell Berry and Religion: Heaven’s Earthly Life*. On the faculty for the Upper Room’s Academy for Spiritual Formation as well, Roger lectures there on postmodern spirituality and traditions of Christian spirituality.

But as a scholar, Roger also stays in touch with congregational life, for example by editing his most recent book, ***Pastoral Work: Engagements with the Vision of Eugene Peterson*** (2014), with a pastor—Jason Byassee, of Boone United Methodist Church (N.C.). The high quality of his thinking about church life in *The Shape of Participation: A Theology of Church Practices* (2010) was recognized in print by The Christian Century, which called Roger’s book “this decade’s best work in ecclesiology.”

Roger also stays in touch by giving service to the wider church—he works on the planning team for the General Board of Discipleship UMC, for instance, and serves as secretary both for the Lilly-funded Colloquium on Excellence in Ministry and for the Core Planning Group of the Lilly Endowment’s Religion Division.

You’ll find more of this fellowship-winning, book-writing, church-serving professor’s work in publications such as *Currents in Theology and Mission*, *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, *New Blackfriars*, and *The Christian Century*. And you just may find Roger himself preaching at your own church one day soon.

Invite Roger to an upcoming church service by contacting him directly at lowens@pts.edu or 412-924-1458. You can also read a recent **blog post for Faith and Leadership** on serving as an introvert or check out his video below.

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