

# Grawemeyer Awards®

## **Analysis of creed advocating solidarity wins religion award**

A religious scholar who explained how one of Christianity's earliest creeds still applies to contemporary life has earned the 2020 Louisville Grawemeyer Award in Religion.

[Stephen J. Patterson](#), a professor of religious and ethical studies at Willamette University, won the award for ideas he set forth in "The Forgotten Creed: Christianity's Original Struggle against Bigotry, Racism and Sexism." Oxford University Press published the book in 2018.

In his work, Patterson explores the significance of a baptismal creed adapted in a letter by the apostle Paul to the Galatians in the New Testament (3:26 and 28): "For you are all children of God in the Spirit; there is no Jew or Greek; there is no slave or free; there is no male and female, for you are all one in the Spirit."

Christ's first followers were dealing with race, class and gender issues, slavery and conflicts between Greeks and Jews in an environment not too far removed from the one we live in today, he says.

"History reminds us again and again that it has always been easier to believe in miracles, in virgin births and atoning deaths, in resurrected bodies and heavenly journeys home," Patterson says, "than something so simple and basic as human solidarity."

Patterson has written nine books and more than 75 articles related to the origins of Christianity. He also lectures on the hidden histories of early Christianity and has appeared in several documentaries.

"Patterson's well-written book proposes a fascinating way to think about those earliest followers of Jesus and their radical notions of human solidarity," said Tyler Mayfield, award director.

The University of Louisville and Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary jointly give the religion prize.