



Chris Gehrz

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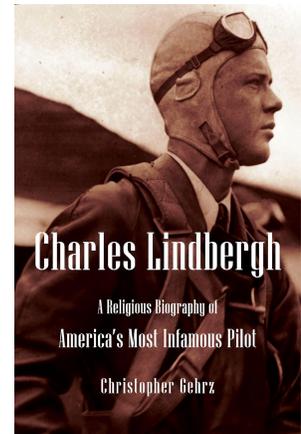
Chris Gehrz (PhD, Yale) is professor of history at Bethel University in St. Paul, Minnesota, where he teaches courses on modern European, military/diplomatic, sports, and church history. Chris is the author or editor of several books, including an acclaimed religious biography of the infamous pilot [Charles A. Lindbergh](#) (Eerdmans, 2021). He attends Roseville Lutheran Church with his wife and two children.

Chris is an experienced speaker who regularly leads classes and gives talks in a variety of church settings — see below for examples. If you are interested in scheduling Chris for an adult class in 2022-23, please contact him at cgehrz@bethel.edu.

Charles Lindbergh

“Any Lindbergh biographer faces a challenge,” wrote historian Grant Wacker last fall in *The Christian Century*, “to tell the truth about the past, both the good and the bad, with both empathy and unflinching honesty. Christopher Gehrz... succeeds brilliantly. His biography is crisply written, deeply researched, and cogently argued.” Jon Butler, past president of the Organization of American Historians, called it “a religious biography as compelling as it is fascinating. An absorbing, necessary American read.”

Chris has taught a mix of one- and two-week classes about Lindbergh, whose spiritual journey led him to embrace eugenics and white supremacy, at First Presbyterian Church (Stillwater), Incarnation Lutheran Church (Shoreview), and Roseville Lutheran Church.



Related topics: religious biography, the “spiritual but not religious”

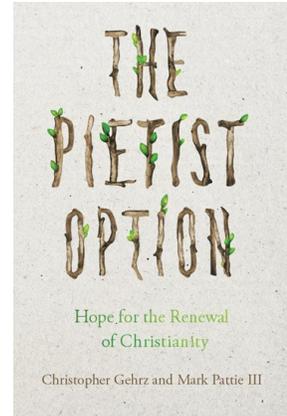
As outgrowths of writing about Lindbergh, Chris has also taught about Christian approaches to the genre of biography and the growth of the group known as the “spiritual but not religious” — with both Charles and Anne Lindbergh exemplifying how spiritually curious Americans have rejected both religion and atheism.

Evangelicalism

In 2021-22 Chris taught two classes on evangelicalism: a four-week series at Salem Covenant Church in New Brighton and a one-week introduction at Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church in St. Paul. Both sought to unpack one of the most contentious terms in American religion, explaining how the meaning of “evangelical” has changed over time and how its present-day version relates to politics, gender, and race in America.

Related topics: Pietism, the Reformations

Chris has published three books on Pietism, the 17th/18th century movement that helped inspire evangelicalism and influenced Lutheran, Methodist, Mennonite, Baptist, and other denominations in 19th/20th century America. In 2021-22 he also represented [the Pietist Tradition](#) in an online ecumenical conversation about what it means to follow Jesus. His 2017 book with Mark Pattie, [The Pietist Option: Hope for the Renewal of Christianity](#), has been the subject of classes at local Baptist, Covenant, Lutheran, and Presbyterian churches.



Chris has also taught several times on the history of the Reformations — e.g., a multi-week series at Calvary Baptist Church in Roseville for the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther’s 95 Theses and a 2019 class at First Covenant Church-St. Paul on Luther and his Catholic rival Erasmus.

Historical Precedents for Ukraine: World War II and the Cold War

Since February, there’s been renewed interest in historical conflicts that can help us understand the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Chris has done interviews about Ukraine with both [KARE-TV](#) and [WCCO-AM](#), drawing on his expertise about World War II and the Cold War. He’s particularly interested in the role of religion in the two conflicts, each the subject of a popular course he’ll reprise in 2022-23 at Bethel.