

**REV. DR. DEREK PENWELL** spent his growing years in Grand Rapids Michigan. He received his education in Michigan, North Carolina, Lexington, Kentucky and Louisville, Kentucky. He teaches Religious Studies and Comparative Humanities at the University of Louisville (2006-2013, 2018-present) and has taught theology at Bellarmine University, Louisville (2008-2014).

Dr. Penwell served in churches in Middlesboro, Kentucky (1993-2001) and Louisville (2001-2005) before joining the Douglass Boulevard Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as its interim minister in 2008. He is now the senior minister at this church.

Dr. Penwell is a researcher, editor, and author. He has written articles on subjects ranging from church history to aesthetic theory and the tragic emotions, His doctoral dissertation was entitled *A Manifestation of All Life: Intersections of Virtue Ethics, Philosophy of Emotion, and Philosophy of Literature* (2010). He has published two books. The first one entitled [\*The Mainliner's Survival Guide to the Post-Denominational World\*](#) (Chalice Press, 2014), offers the paradoxical answer to the question about whether the Protestant Mainline is dying, and presents the author's vision of how mainline denominations can avoid despair in an emerging world. The second one entitled *“Outlandish: An Unlikely Messiah, a Messy Ministry and the Call to Mobilize* (Chalice Press, 2019), asks the question: “What if you found out that the way Jesus is represented by popular Christianity gets him exactly backwards, reinforcing the narrative of power and success that his life and ministry challenged?” This book takes a careful look at Jesus' life, ministry, death, and resurrection, arguing that, taken together, they show not only the cost of following him, but how following his counterintuitive lead can transform the world.

Dr. Penwell is an activist and speaker. With his congregation, he engages in activist and prophetic ministries that fight injustice in their city and state. He speaks and writes boldly in plain language about social justice and religious hypocrisy while working from an extensive academic foundation. He is passionate in his quest for justice for LGBTQ people, Muslims, people of color, immigrants, and those people regularly victimized by wielders of power who run roughshod over the prostrate bodies of those on the margins.

He has participated in a number of programs organized by *The Salaam Network* including panel-presentations (February-March 2020) on the catastrophic effect of Senate Bill-1 - anti immigration bill - on the state of Kentucky. His focus has been on the theological, spiritual and ethical implications of the proposed legislation.

Dr. Penwell was awarded the first-ever “Outstanding Alumnus Award” by *The Association of Humanities Academics* at University of Louisville in 2011.

He currently blogs at [his own site](#), writing also for The Good Men Project. He can also be found on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).