

JAMES ELISHA TANETI

Director of the Syngman Rhee Global Mission Center
& Assistant Professor of World Christianity

Union Presbyterian Seminary
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Degrees Earned:

Ph.D. Union Presbyterian Seminary (Church History), 2012
Th.M. Western Theological Seminary (Theology), 2006
Th.M. Princeton Theological Seminary (Church History), 2003
M.Th. United Theological College, India (Church History), 1998
M.Div. United Theological College, India, 1994
B.Th. Serampore College, India, 1991

Areas of Specialization

World Christianity; History of Christianity (Modern); South Asian Christianity
Hindu-Christian Studies; Hindu Traditions; and Dalit Worldviews
Mission; Ecumenism; and Interfaith Dialogue

Academic Administration & Teaching

Director of the Syngman Rhee Global Mission Center & Assistant Professor of World
Christianity, 2018-Present
Director of Ministry & Context, Interdenominational Theological Center, 2017-2018
Adjunct Professor, North Carolina Wesleyan College, 2012-2017
Adjunct Professor, Mount Olive University, 2013-2017
Visiting Lecturer, Mennonite Brethren College, India, 2003-2018
Adjunct Professor, Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, 2016
Adjunct Professor, Campbell University Divinity School, 2013
Teaching Assistant, Union Presbyterian Seminary, 2008 - 2010
Junior Lecturer, Serampore College, India, 1998 – 2002

Continuing Education

Wabash Early Career Theo Workshop —2021-22
Breaking the Academic Mold —2022

Professional Affiliations

American Academy of Religion
American Society of Church History/Research & Prizes Committee
American Society of Missiology
Society for Hindu-Christian Studies/Board of Directors

Ecclesiastical Affiliation

Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (United States of America)

Books

- *Telugu Christians: A History* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2022)
- *Caste, Gender, and Christianity in Colonial India: Telugu Women in Mission* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013)
- *History of the Telugu Christians: A Bibliography* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2011)

Journal Articles and Book Chapters

- “Evangelicalism and Bhakti Tradition among Telugu Christians,” in *Alterity and the Evasion of Justice: Explorations of the “Other” in World Christianity* edited by Deanna Womack and Raimundo Cesar Barreto Jr. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2023): 77-95.
- “Romans 12:1-8” in *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 74:1 (January 2020): 74-76.
- “Blurring the Boundaries: Telugu Biblewomen, Itinerancy, and Social Mobility,” in *Mission At and From the Margins: Patterns, Protagonists, and Perspectives*. Edited by Peniel Rajkumar and et al. (Oxford: Regnum, 2014): 127-141.
- “Reconfiguring Home: Telugu Biblewomen, Protestant Missionaries, and Christian Marriage.” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 35:1 (January 2011): 30-36.
- “The Beginnings of Christianity among the Telugus.” *Indian Church History Review* 43:2 (December 2008): 118-134.
- “Canadian Baptist Missionaries and the British Raj.” *American Baptist Quarterly* 42:6 (April 2008): 422-435.
- “Gandhi and Protestant Missionaries in the 1930s: Portraits of Gandhi in Missionary Literature.” *Bangalore Theological Forum* 39:2 (December 2007): 110-124.
- “Dalit Conversions to the Methodist Episcopal Church in Karnataka.” *Methodist History* 45:4 (July 2007): 204-213.
- “Christian Mission and Inter-faith Dialogue: A Dalit Christian’s Reflections” *Indian Journal of Theology* 49:1 (2007): 74-84.

Encyclopedia Entry

- “Liberation Theology in World Christianity” in *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*, Volume XVI, 2018: 458-459.

Book Reviews

- *Migration and the Making of the Global Christianity*, by Jehu H. Hanciles in the upcoming *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* (due in April 2024)
- *Western Jesuit Scholars in India: Tracing Their Paths, Reassessing Their Goals*, by Francis X. Cloony in *Journal of Hindu-Christian Studies* 35 (2022):77-78.
- *Dalit Christians in South India: Caste, Ideology and Lived Religion*, by Ashok Kumar Mocherla in *International Journal of Asian Christianity* 5:1 (March 2022): 157-158.
- *Circling the Elephant: A Comparative Theology of Religious Diversity*, by John Thatamanil in *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 76:1 (January 2022): 86-87.
- *The European Encounter with Hinduism in India*, by Jan Peter Schouten and translated by Henry Jansen in *Journal of Hindu-Christian Studies* 34:1 (2021):79-81.
- *Jesus in Asia*, by R.S. Sugirtharajah in *Missiology: An International Review* 48:2 (April 2020): 215.
- *Protestant Christianity in the Indian Diaspora: Abjected Identities, Evangelical Relations and Pentecostal Vision*, by Robbie B. H. Goh in *Review & Expositor* 116:3 (August 2019):378-379.
- *Traveling in Time with Pioneers of our Faith*, by Narola Ao McFayden in *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 73:2 (April 2019): 222-223.
- *Missionary Christianity and Local Religion: American Evangelicalism in North India, 1836-1870*, by Arun Jones in *Review & Expositor* 115:2 (May 2018): 305.
- *The Past, Present, and Future of Theologies of Interreligious Dialogue*, by Terence Merrigan & John Friday in *Journal of Hindu-Christian Studies* 30:1 (2018):134-135.
- *The Bible Cause: A History of the American Bible Society*, by John Fea in *Review & Expositor* 114:4 (May 2017): 609-610.
- *Establishing Religious Freedom: Jefferson's Statute in Virginia*, by Thomas E. Buckley in *Review & Expositor* 114:3 (May 2017): 316-317.
- *To Be Cared For: The Power of Conversion and Foreignness of Belonging in an Indian Slum*, Nate Robert in *Journal of Hindu-Christian Studies* 30:1 (2017): 129-131.
- *The Globalization of Christianity: Implication for Christian Ministry and Theology*, edited Gordon Heath in *Review & Expositor* 113:4 (November 2016): 566-567.
- *Theology from the Trenches: Reflections on Urban Ministry*, by Roger Gench in *Missiology: An International Review* 44 (October 2016): 496.
- *Shared Stories and Rival Tellings: Early Encounters of Jews, Christians, and Muslims*, by Robert C. Gregg in *Missiology: An International Review* 44 (October 2016): 504-505.
- *Jesus without Borders: Christology in the Majority World*, edited by Gene L. Green and et al. in *Currents in Theology and Mission* 43:3 (July 2016): 39.
- *Becoming the Gospel: Paul, Participation, and Mission*, by Michael J. Gorman in *Mission Studies* 33:1 (2016): 105-106.
- *The Story That Chooses Us: A Tapestry of Missional Vision*, by George Hunsberger in *Mission Studies* 33:1 (2016): 105-106.
- *World Religions and Contemporary Issues: How Evolving Views on Ecology, Peace, and Women are Impacting Faith Today*, by Brennan Hill in *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 70:2 (April 2016): 237-238.
- *Christianity and Religious Diversity: Clarifying Christian Commitments in a Globalizing Age*, by Harold A. Netland in *Theology Today* 73:1 (April 2016): 83-84.

- *Women's Socioeconomic Status and Religious Leadership in Asia Minor in the First Two Centuries C.E.*, by Katherine Bain in *Currents in Theology and Mission* 43:2 (April 2016): 29.
- *Called to Witness: Doing Missional Theology*, by Darrell L. Guder in *Review & Expositor* 113:1 (February 2016): 131-132.
- *To All Nations from All Nations: A History of the Christian Missionary Movement*, by Carlos F. Cardoza-Orlandi & Justo L. Gonzalez in *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 71:1 (Jan 2016): 118-119.
- *The Spirit Moves West: Korean Missionaries in America*, by Rebeca Y. Kim in *Mission Studies* 32:3 (Fall 2015): 452-453.
- *Ecclesial Identities in a Multi-faith Context: Jesus Truth-Gatherings (Yeshu Satsangs) among Hindus and Sikhs in Northwest India*, by Darren Todd Duerksen in *Mission Studies* 32:3 (Fall 2015): 443-444.
- *Pentecostals, Proselytization, and Anti-Christian Violence in Contemporary India*, by Chad M. Bauman in *Review & Expositor* 112:3 (August 2015): 485-486.
- *Christians in South Indian Villages, 1959-2009*, by John B. Carman and Chilkuri Vasanth Rao in *Review & Expositor* 112:3 (August 2015): 486-487.
- *Missional Worship and Worshipful Mission: Gathering as God's People, Going Out in God's Name*, by Ruth A. Meyers in *Mission Studies* 32:2 (Summer 2015):323-324.
- *The Pariah Problem: Caste, Religion, and the Social in Modern India*, by Rupa Viswanath in *Mission Studies* 32:1 (Spring 2015):165-166.
- *Sent Forth: African Missionary Work in the West*, by Harvey C. Kwiyani in *Mission Studies* 32:1 (Spring 2015):171-172.
- *Mighty England Do Good: Culture, Faith, Empire, and World in the Foreign Missions of the Church of England, 1850-1915*, by Steven S. Maughan in *Mission Studies* 32:1 (Spring 2015):167-168.
- *The Cambridge Companion to Pentecostalism*, edited by Cecil M. Robeck Jr. and Amos Yong in *Currents in Theology and Mission* 42:1 (January/February 2015): 64-65.
- *What Christians can learn from Other Religions*, by Phillip Wogaman in *Review & Expositor* 111:4 (November 2014): 432-433.
- *Understanding Christian Mission: Participation in Suffering and Glory*, by Scott W. Sunquist in *Mission Studies* 31:3 (Fall 2014): 471.
- *Summoned from the Margin: Homecoming of an African*, by Lamin Sanneh in *Mission Studies* 31:3 (Fall 2014): 450-451.
- *Why Did Jesus, Moses, the Buddha, and Mohammed Cross the Road? Christian Identity in a Multi-Faith World*, by Brian D. McLaren in *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 68:3 (July 2014): 326-327.
- *To the Ends of the Earth: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity*, by Allan Anderson in *Mission Studies* 31:2 (Spring 2014): 308-309.
- *Intercultural Theology: Approaches and Themes*, edited by Marl J. Cartledge and David Cheetham in *Mission Studies* 31:2 (Spring 2014): 285-286.
- *Introducing World Christianity*, edited by Charles E. Farhadian in *Mission Studies* 30:2 (Spring 2013): 255-256.
- *Missional Preaching: Engage, Embrace, Transform*, by Al Tizon in *Currents in Theology and Mission* 40:5 (October 2013): 360.
- *The Vitality of Liberation Theology*, by Craig L. Nessian in *Currents in Theology and Mission*

40:3 (June 2013): 209-210.

- *News of Boundless Riches: Interrogating, Comparing and Reconstructing Mission in Global Era*, edited by Max Stackhouse and Lalsangkima Pachuia in *The Bulletin of the Institute of Reformed Theology* 9:2 (Winter 2011): 11.
- *Fortress Introduction to the History of Christianity in the United States*, by Nancy Koester in *Currents in Theology and Mission* 36:2 (April 2009): 142-143.
- *History of Christianity in Asia, Vol.II, 1500-1900*, by Samuel Moffett in *Reformed Review* 61:3 (Fall 2008): 153-154.
- *Growing Healthy Asian American Churches*, edited by Pater Cha & et al. in *Reformed Review* 60:2 (Spring 2007): 106-107.
- *Lesslie Newbigin: Missionary Theologian -A Reader*, edited by Paul Weston in *Reformed Review* 60:2 (Spring 2007): 109-110.

Lectures & Presentations

- “Dalits, Bible, and Liberation” at International Dalit Symposium in Bangalore, India, January 2023.
- “Impact of Bible Translations on Local Communities” at Gurukul Lutheran Theological College in Chennai, July 2022
- “Trends in Mission” at Oriental Theological Seminary in Dhimapur, India, November 2022.
- “The Confluence of Evangelical, Bhakti, and Dalit Worldviews of Telugu Christianity” at the annual World Christianity Conference at Princeton Theological Seminary, March 2021.
- “Missionaries in the Movies: A Panel Discussion” at the Eastern Fellowship of Professors of Mission Annual Meeting, November 2020.
- “Spirit at the Edges: Sanskritization of Telugu Pentecostals” at the Annual Dawe Lecture, Union Presbyterian Seminary, March 2019.
- “Teaching History of Christianity in Asia,” Myanmar Association of Theological Education, December 2018.
- “Underlining the Untouched Religions of India,” the Yale-Edinburgh Group on the History of Missionary Movement and Non-Western Christianity Annual Meeting, Yale Divinity School, June 2015.
- “Female Deities and Women Priests: The Matangi Tradition of South India,” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, November 2014.
- “Attitudes of Magisterial Reformers to Armed Conflict,” the Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College, Mennonite Brethren Centenary Bible College, India, September 2014.
- “A Book-talk on Caste, Gender, and Christianity in Colonial India: Telugu Women in Mission,” Department of Patient Counseling, Virginia Commonwealth University, July 2014.
- “The World Their Classroom: Theological Education of Women in Colonial India,” the Yale-Edinburgh Group on the History of Missionary Movement and Non-Western Christianity Annual Meeting, Yale Divinity School, July 2011.
- “‘Women with Bibles’: Origins and Development of the Office of Biblewomen in South India,” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, October 2010.
- “In the Women’s Compartment: Reflections of a Man in Women’s Studies” at Graduate Student Association Colloquy, Union Presbyterian Seminary, February 2008.

- “Madiga Christians and the Subversive Gospel,” the Yale-Edinburgh Group on the History of Missionary Movement and Non-Western Christianity Annual Meeting, Yale Divinity School, June 2007.
- “Encounter between Protestant and Telugu Women’s Paradigms of Scripture” at Engaging Particularities Conference, Boston College, March 2007.

Courses Taught at the Graduate Level

- ✚ Global Christianity, Union Presbyterian Seminary
- ✚ History of Christianity from the Reformation, Union Presbyterian Seminary
- ✚ Church in a Multi-Faith World, Union Presbyterian Seminary
- ✚ Ministry at the Margins, Union Presbyterian Seminary
- ✚ Spirit in the World, Union Presbyterian Seminary
- ✚ India Travel Seminar, Union Presbyterian Seminary
- ✚ Ghana Travel Seminar, Union Presbyterian Seminary
- ✚ Understanding God’s Mission, Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond
- ✚ World Religions, Campbell University Divinity College
- ✚ History of Christianity: A General Introduction
- ✚ History of Ecumenical Movement

Independent Studies

- ✚ Christ in Asia, Union Presbyterian Seminary
- ✚ Hope, Protest, and God-Talk in Dalit Christian Literature, Union Presbyterian Seminary
- ✚ Resistance and Hope in Tamil Christian Hymns, Union Presbyterian Seminary

Committees Served

- Committee on Student Life & Vocation, 2018-Present
- Church History Search Committee, 2022
- Christian Education Search Committee, 2020
- Theology & Ethics Search Committee, 2019

Vlogging (YouTube Channel: “Theologizing in Telugu by Taneti”)

- “Defining Moments in Church History” –A 7-week series in Telugu, 2023
- “Christianity in India” –A 10-week series in Telugu, 2021
- “History of Christianity” –A 21-week series in Telugu, 2021
- “Celebrating Theological Education in Telugu” –A series of 24 interviews with Telugu theological educators in Telugu, 2020-2021
- “Creeds, Confessions, and Their Social Implications” –A series of 6 lectures on ecumenical creeds and denominational confessions, 2020-2021
- “Mission-Talk” –A series of 7 short talks on contemporary paradigms of mission, 2020
- “Church-Talk” – A series of 12 short talks on ecclesiology, 2020

Social Media

- *Book Review from Taneti's Shelf: A Facebook Page*

Contributions to the Church Media

“Joy: Moments of Grace in a Triple Pandemic” in *Presbyterian Outlook*, April 27, 2021

“Who is God Really: God is the Incarnate” in *Presbyterian Outlook*, March 11, 2020

“Book Review of *Encountering God in Tyrannical Texts: Reflections on Paul, Women, and the Authority of Scripture*” in *Presbyterian Outlook*, November 17, 2016

Contributions to the Denomination

“From Lament to Hope,” a Bible Study co-offered with Mary Taneti at the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America General Assembly, 2020

Member of World Missions Committee of the Presbytery of the James, 2018-Present