

Moses Penumaka

mpenumaka@plts.edu

Lutheran Pastor, Systematic Theologian, Seminary Professor, Director of TEEM, serves on National Church Council and the Executive Council of ELCA and member of Graduate Curriculum Committee of California Lutheran University.

Humble, accomplisher, strategic in governance, diplomatic in relationships, promotor, and servant leader. Highly experienced in interfaith and ecumenical work in multicultural contexts; India, Asia and Pacific, and USA. Deeply committed to ministry of Word and Sacrament. Visionary for theological education for ministry and leadership.

Education

Graduate Theological Union, California

Doctor of Theology in Systematic and Philosophical Theology
2000- 2006

Senate of Serampore, India - United Theological College, Bangalore, India

Master of Theology in Systematic Theology
1991 -1993

Bachelor of Divinity
1980-1985

Andhra University, India

Bachelor of Science - Geology Major Physics and Chemistry
1977-1980

Dissertation

*Communicatio idiomatum and aham brahmasmi: Martin Luther's understanding of "communication of attributes" and its soteriological implications for Sri Shankaracharya's understanding of "I am Brahman." A comparative and analytical study of *advaita* philosophy and Martin Luther's theology with a theological critique from a dalit, feminist, and liberation perspective.*

Dissertation committee:

Drs. Ted Peters (Chair), Rosemary Radford Ruether, Jane Strohl, and Surjit Singh

Scholarships and Fellowships

2025 Bolick Foundation grant for Theological Education for Indigenous Leaders Scholarships
2024 Bolick Foundation grant for Theological Education for Indigenous Leaders Scholarships
2023 Bolick Foundation grant for Theological Education for Indigenous Leaders TEIL
through Fund for Leadership (FFL) ELCA
2024-25 Vesper Society TEIL
2023-24 Vesper Society TEIL
2022-23 Vesper Society TEEM AIAN grant
2021-22 Vesper Society TEEM American Indian Alaska Native grant
2019-20 Vesper Society TEEM Interfaith grant
2018-19 Vesper Society TEEM Interfaith grant
2024 Hewlett-Packard Travel Grant
2018 Hewlett-Packard Travel Grant
2017 Hewlett-Packard Travel Grant
2010-2011 Wabash Workshops for Pre-Tenure Faculty
2004-2005, ELCA, Educational Grant for Advanced Theological Studies
2003-2004, ELCA, Educational Grant for Advanced Theological Studies
2002-2003, ELCA, Educational Grant for Advanced Theological Studies
2000-2002, Graduate Theological Union tuition fellowship

Administrative Experience

Director of Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM)

Since June 2008, at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary of California Lutheran University for the past fifteen years (since June 2008). Called by the ELCA as the Director for TEEM at PLTS. The role of the director is to complete management of the program, invite faculty, advise students, work with synods, Candidacy Committees, and ELCA leaders. Collaborate with sister seminaries and regions to offer theological education to all in their own specific contexts. Teach in the program. playing the multiple roles of a President, Academic Dean and Direct. Prepared more than 300 pastors serving the ELCA.

Director of Theological Education for Indigenous Leaders (TEIL)

I had the privilege and secured resources to accompany and work with indigenous wisdom keepers to design and launch Theological Education for Indigenous Leaders, TEIL, a first of its kind in theological education in the ELCA. This is a ground-breaking educational model being designed and taught by the Indigenous Wisdom Keepers. The first cohort of 10 indigenous leaders started classes in FALL at Augustana Lutheran Church, Portland, OR, since its launching in FALL 2023, on October the 8th, Indigenous Peoples Day. The 1st cohort graduated on May 23rd, 2026.

Graduate Curriculum Committee

I am assigned to serve on GCC for a two-year term 2025-28.

Faculty Senator (2nd term)

PLTS faculty elected representative to the California Lutheran University Faculty Senate since 2020. 2020-2022- 2022-2024 Served two terms.

Pastor/Mission Developer

Developed an ethnic/language specific (English, Telugu and Hindi) and a multi-cultural congregation in San Francisco Bay area with Caucasians and South Asians from India at the Good Shepherd South Asian Ministry, Fremont, CA.

Assistant Systems Administrator

Information Technology Department, Pacific School of Religion (PSR), Berkeley, CA. Developed multimedia tools for teaching and learning at PSR. Coordinated Multimedia technology requirements for faculty and students at PSR and Graduate Theological Union, GTU, Berkeley, CA.

National General Secretary

Worked for six years as the Student Christian Movement of India (SCMI) affiliated to the World Student Christian Federation, WSCF: My work as a national executive consisted of a three-fold responsibility: a) General Secretary of a national ecumenical student movement, b) Executive Secretary of a Indian government registered Society, and c) Executive Secretary of a Indian government registered Trust Association.

TEEM (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries) related activities

- Collaborating with the indigenous leaders of the association of American Indian and Alaska Native Ministries in the ELCA in designing curriculum for Theological Education for Indigenous Leaders TEIL, since summer 2022. The program is be launched with 10 indigenous students during FALL 2023. The 1st cohort graduated on May 23rd, 2026.
- Collaborating with Lutheran Theological Scholl at Chicago, LSTC to offer TEEM for regions 4 and 5 since Fall 2022.
- Developed a new course “Interfaith Leadership and Engagement” for TEEM with grant from Vesper Society, San Francisco for two consecutive years since 2018
- Organizing Annual TEEM Conference, since October 2008 for the past 15 years
- Developed collaboration for TEEM between PLTS and Lutheran Center, Indiana Kentucky Synod, Indianapolis, Indiana to offer TEEM classes in Indianapolis for students from Region 6 covering Ohio, Wisconsin and Michigan

- Developed collaboration for TEEM between PLTS and Lutheran Theological Center in Atlanta (LTCA), Georgia to offer classes for students from Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and Tennessee.
- Revised Curriculum for TEEM in 2010
- Developed TEEM Collaboration between PLTS and CDSP 2010-2013
- Organized TEEM Monterey Park Program for Asian American Cohort through which around 20 Asian American leaders were trained 2009-2010

Participation at national and local boards and Committee

ELCA Church Council 2025-2032
 ELCA Executive Committee 2025-2032
 ELCA Educational Debt Task Force, 2022- current
 ELCA advisory Board for Strategic Diversity 2020 - Current
 ELCA Task Force for Authentic Diversity, 2016-2019
 ELCA Theological Roundtable Asian Lutheran International Conference representative
 Current since April 2013
 President, Association of Asian and Pacific Islanders, ELCA 2023- 2026
 Chairperson, Asia Project Board, GTU (2009-2015)
 Member, Steering Committee, Association of Teaching Theologians, ELCA 2014-2020
 Member of C4 Committee at PLTS (2015-16)
 Member of PLTS Seminary Hearing Board 2018-19
 Chairperson, Community Life Committee, PLTS, Spring 2012
 Program Director Graduate Theological Union, GTU – Asia (and Oceania) Project, since Fall 2010- Spring 2013
 Table One – Stewards of Abundance, ELCA study project on Seminarian Debt
 Member Western Mission Network Coordinating Committee
 Select fisher's Net Board (online courses), ELCA Lifelong Learning
 PLTS Faculty representative in Candidacy Committee, Alaska Synod
 PLTS Faculty representative in Candidacy Committee, Eastern Washington and Idaho Synod
 PLTS Faculty representative in Candidacy Committee, Oregon Synod

Teaching and research interests

Interfaith studies especially in Hinduism, Islam, and Buddhism
 Theology and Religion
 Faith and cultural traditions in Asia and Oceania
 Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice
Advaita Philosophy
 Christology and Non-duality

Teaching Experience at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary of California Lutheran University and the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA

- Major World Religions/Interfaith Leadership and Engagement TEEM
- Ministry in Context, TEEM
- Systematic Theology TEEM
- Methods and Hermeneutics
- ELCA Polity
- Lead Faculty for Graduate Theological Union course Introduction to Asian and Oceania Cultural and Faith Traditions from FALL 2009 to Spring 2015.
- Systematic and Contextual Theology at PLTS-GTU consortium Fall 2008 to Fall 2011. Co-teaching with Ted Peters.
- Teaching Assistant to Rosemary Radford Ruether and Delwin Brown, Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, CA. 2005.
- Teaching Assistant and multi-media data collection for Rosemary Radford Ruether's book *Goddesses and the Divine Feminine, A Western Religious History* published by University of California Press, 2005.
- Guest lectures on Hinduism in World Religions Class at PLTS, Berkeley, CA. 2004.
- Developed and facilitated a comprehensive workshop (for all incoming students) on "Inter-cultural teaching and learning" for Doctoral students at GTU, 2004.
- National General Secretary of the Student Christian Movement of India affiliated to the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), developing leadership among graduate students, 1994-2000.
- Jr. Lecturer, Christian Theology and Ethics, Leonard Theological College, (graduate school) Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, India, 1993-94.
- Visiting Faculty - School of Ecumenical Theology at Ecumenical Christian Center, Bangalore, and India, 1994-1997.
- Visiting Faculty - All India Association for Christian Higher Education - Summer Institute, 1995-96.

Publications

“Towards Inter-religious Spiritual Hospitality: A Lutheran Perspective” Sherma., Rita D. & Purushottama Bilimoria, Editors and Pravina Rodrigues, Associate Editor, *Sustainable Societies: Interreligious, Interdisciplinary Responses*, Springer United Nations SDG Book Series, Dordrecht: Springer, 2021.

“A Kairos moment for Theological Education in the ELCA: Reflections on TEAC from the margins”, in *Journal of Lutheran Ethics*, Vol. 18, Issue 5, September/October 2018.
<https://elca.org/JLE/Articles/1251>

“Communities of Faith as Classroom for “Doing” theology and Ministry” in Vethanayagamony, P. and Greifenhagen, F. V. Eds *Global Lutheranism, vitality and challenges*, Minneapolis, MN: Lutheran University Press, 2018.

“Reformation and Theological Education in Asia” at the **American Academy of Religion** conference, Boston, Massachusetts, November 2017. (In process)

"The Suffering Reality of the Oppressed in God- The World's Future and its Implication for Dalit Theology" in *Currents in Theology and Mission*, Vol. 39, No. 4, August 2012.

Guest Editor, TEEM and the Future of Theological Education, *Currents in Theology and Mission*, Vol. 38, No.3, June 2011.

“Luther and Shankara: Two Ways of Salvation in the India Context,” *Dialog, A Journal of Theology*, Volume 43, No.3, Fall 2006.

“Confirmation Ministry in the Crossfire of Tolerance and Fascism,” *Dialog: A Journal of Theology*, Volume 41, No.3, Fall 2002.

Editor (1994 -2000) *Aikyatha*, (SCMI: Bangalore) a publication of SCMI.

Editor, *Struggles to Celebrate Life: Biblical Reflections on women, Dalit and Media*, (SCMI: Bangalore, 1998).

“Theological Implications of the Historical Reconstruction of Jesus Movement and Early Church from a Feminist Perspective”, in Prasanna Kumari, ed. *Women in Church and Society: Essays in Honor of Florence Robinson* (Department of Women Studies- Gurukul: Chennai, 1999), pp. 67-79.

“Female Infanticide and Feotocide: Unwanted at Birth and Even After Birth” in Elizabeth Joy, ed. *Lived Realities: Faith Reflections on Gender Justice*. (CSIRS: Bangalore, 1999), pp. 101-112.

“Dreams of Joseph and Pharaoh: A Brief Biblical Reflection on Globalization” in P. Jagdish Gandhi & George Cherian, eds. *Globalization: A Challenge to the Church* (AIASCA: Chennai, 1998), pp. 103-105.

“Tiger and Lamb graze together: Mission and Evangelism in the Context of Megatrends in Asia” in Soman Das, Ed. *Mission and Evangelism* (ISPCK: Delhi, 1998), pp. 164- 170.

“Transcending Boundaries with the Son of Man, of No-boundaries,” *Transcending Boundaries for a True Ecumenism*, Report of the consultation in honor of Rev. Dr. Satish C. Gyan (RCDRC: Raipur, 1998), pp. 58-63.

“Easter and the Dalits: Why do you seek the living among the dead?” *Vidyajyothi: Journal of Theological Reflection*, Vol. 58, No. 5, May 1994, pp. 292-297.

“A theological reflection on Cry for life—A Faith Response,” *Aikyatha* (SCMI: Bangalore) April 1994.

Papers from lectures and research projects under review for publication

Moderator Panel Discussion: Impact of the Pandemic on Asians and Pacific Islanders at the 15th Assembly of the Association of Asian and Pacific Islanders-ELCA met on the theme “Comfort, Comfort My People: Impact of the Pandemic on Asian and Pacific Islander, January 10-11, 2023. Cheng Rai, Thailand.

Panelist on “Teach, Preach, and Heal” at the 2nd African International Lutheran Conference AILC, Monrovia, Liberia, April 23 to 26th.

“Crossing the Boundaries of Race, Gender and Status: Ethiopian Eunuch and Phillip in Acts 8: 26-40” Bible Study at 10th Asian Lutheran International Conference ALIC, Udon Thani, Thailand, January, 28, 2019.

“Reconnecting, Re-rooting and Growing” at “*Ubuntu- I am Because We Are*” the first International African Lutheran Conference, Moshi, Tanzania August 9-13, 2018.

“Reformation as ongoing movement for the empowerment of *dalits*” at the 500 Reformation Celebration held at the Andhra Christian Theological College, Secunderabad, South India, November 2017.

“Martin Luther in South Asia” at the Muilenburg-Koenig History of Religion Seminar, San Anselmo, California, November 2017.

“Culture of Hate and Culture of Exclusion: An interreligious Response” on 6th October 2016. (Organizer, presenter, and moderator of the symposium).

Major Trends in Inter-faith dialogue, Green Tea conversation at GTU Dinner's Board Room
GTU Library April 16, 2015.

April 17-18, 2015, Pacific Coast Theological Society CDSP, Berkeley, CA, title "*Shariradhari*
and *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*: a comparative study of doctrine of Incarnation in Christian and
Embodiment in Sikh faith traditions".

April 17-18 Panelist on the responding to PCTS Condor Award book by Kristin Johnston
Largen, *Finding God among Our Neighbors: An Interfaith Systematic Theology*. Fortress Press:
Minneapolis, 2013.

"Negating Boundaries: An Indian theological Perspective" (Unpublished) paper presented at the
Asian Pacific Americans and Religion Research Initiative Annual Conference, Hass School of
Business, Berkeley, CA, August 2003.

"Christology in the midst of Globalization" (Unpublished) paper presented at PANA and PSR
lecture series in Spring 2003.

Names of Allah in understanding the nature of God; a study of 99 names of Allah with special
reference to the 10th century Islamic philosopher: Al Ghazali. (Wabash Grant)

"*Misfits*" for *Mission*, a panel presentation at The Summit, ELCA national leadership summit of
multicultural and ethnic ministries of ELCA, Chicago, January 2013.

Emerging vision for Theological Education, keynote address at TEEM Annual October
Conference 2012.

"We and the Bible – New eyes for reading, new hearts for loving" keynote at the eleventh
Assembly of the Association of Asians and Pacific Islanders-ELCA, Christ Lutheran Church,
Monterey Park, CA, April 11-14, 2012

Immersion of the whole – integration and liberation a perspective from "The World as We
See It: Where is everybody?" Response to presentation by Richard Perry Jr., at Teachers of
Color Conference, Minneapolis July 30- Aug 2, 2008, ELCA- Vocation & Education and
Commission for Multicultural Ministries.

Reading Bible in Asian Context, at the 5th Asian International Lutheran Conference (ALIC) in
Hong Kong, February 2009.

Presentation on TEEM and moderator for small groups at the LWF Global Conference on
"Theology in the Life of the Churches," held in Augsburg, Germany, March 25-31, 2009.

Hein-Fri 2009 lecture at PLTS "Hearing the Word: Lutheran Perspectives on Biblical
Interpretation" Respondent to main speaker: Rev. Dr. Craig Nesson, Wartburg Seminary
"Interpreting the Bible Lutheranly: Between the Undertow and a Tsunami" on April 22, 2009.

“Christianity and Church’s impact in India today: retrospection on the origins and impact of Christianity in the Indian subcontinent” a lecture presented at Indian Cultural Center – Friends of Same Wave Length (FOSWEL), Cupertino, CA, August 2010.

Teaching Via Zoom and Webinars during the pandemic

Holden Interfaith Live webinars: on “Us, Them, and All: Weaving our Identities and Common Humanity within the Unity of Life”

Panel on How and Why of Interfaith on June 29, 2020 11:00 AM Pacific Time (US and Canada)
Panelist Kathryn Lohre, **Moses Penumaka**, Rabbi Alana Suskan

<https://pathstounderstanding.org/our-media/holden-interfaith-week/>

Wednesday, July 22, 2020 - 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM Pacific

Webinar: *The Call to Be a Blessing to all Families, Cultures and Nations*

Link and Description: <https://pathstounderstanding.org/the-call-to-be-a-blessing-to-all-families-cultures-and-nations/>

Teaching Staff: Imam Adam Jamal, Rabbi Yohanna Kinberg, Pastor Terry Kylo, **Dr. Moses Penumaka**

Friday July 24, 2020 - 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM Pacific Webinar: *Human Beings within the Ecosystem*, Link and Description: <https://pathstounderstanding.org/human-beings-within-the-ecosystem>

Holden Village Teaching Staff: **Dr. Moses Penumaka**, Rabbi Yohanna Kinberg, Pastor Terry Kylo, Pastor Bethany Hull Somers, and Imam Adam Jamal

The Racial and Ethnic Ministry Discipling Team of Serra Pacific Synod and “Just Lutheran”

"Town Halls to Minimize Bias in the Lutheran Church" July 17, 2020 02:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada).

Guest Pastor for Ministry in the local ELCA Churches Preach and preside at Local churches in Bay Area.

Lutheran Advising Clergy for Shepherd by the Sea, Episcopal and Lutheran Mission at Gualala, CA since April 2021 -December 2026.

Guest Pastor for Indian (south Asian) ministries Preach and preside in Telugu at the Local Indian Church, in the Bay Area.