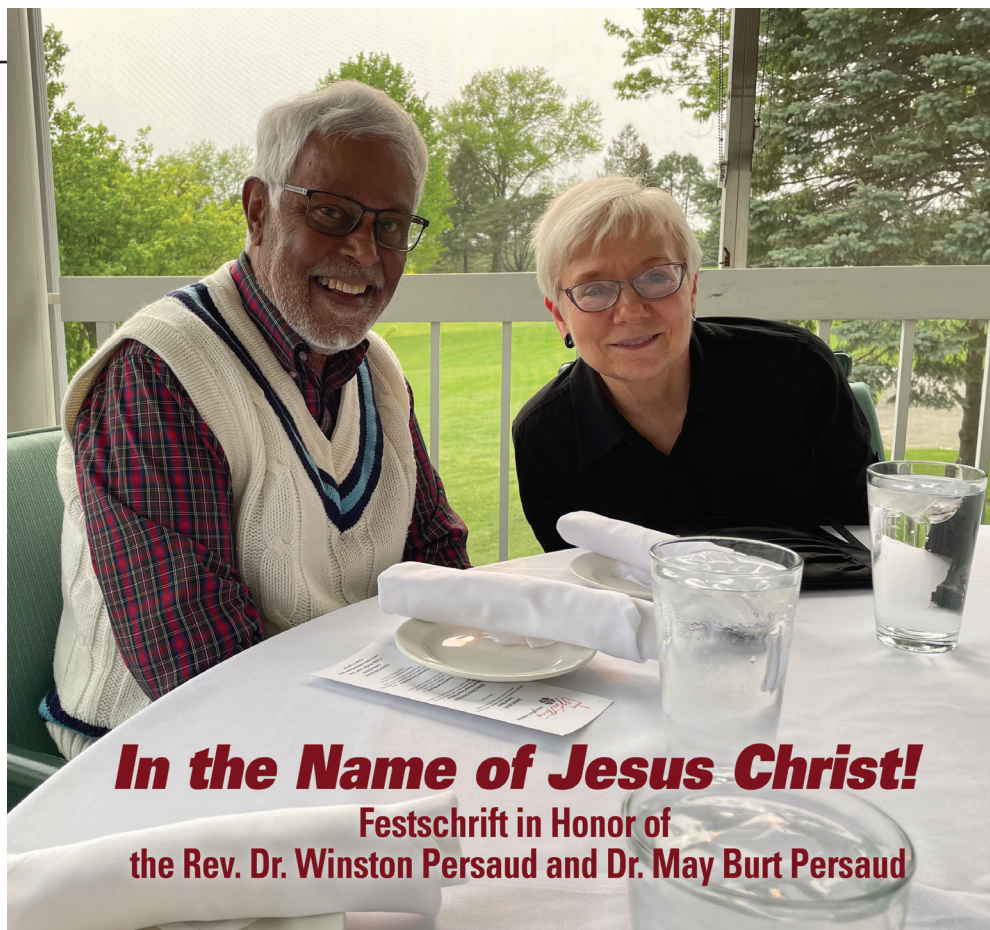




In the Name of Jesus Christ!
Festschrift in Honor of
the Rev. Dr. Winston Persaud and Dr. May Burt Persaud

Introduction to This Issue

The lives and legacies of Winston Persaud and May Burt Persaud are dedicated to ministry, mission, and proclamation in the Name of Jesus Christ. The Rev. Dr. Winston D. Persaud—Professor of Systematic Theology, Director of the Center for Global Theologies, and Holder of the Kent S. Knutson & United Evangelical Lutheran Church Chair in Theology and Mission—taught systematic theology and served in countless leadership capacities at Wartburg Theological Seminary (WTS) for nearly fifty years. His theological acumen, teaching, storytelling, incredible memory, and service as a teaching theologian of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) have etched the deeper understanding of and faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ on students, advisees, alumni, faculty colleagues, and the entire church. Whenever we look upon the international flags in the Von Schwartz refectory, we can give God thanks for Professor Winston Persaud's tireless commitments to the global church and for bringing WTS into deeper relationship with the one holy catholic apostolic church. His contributions to the Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue in the United States, the ELCA global mission commitment to accompaniment, and leadership of the Center for Global Theologies have made an enormous impact not only at WTS but across the world. We also underscore the remarkable commitment and contributions to the Lutheran Church in Guyana through his annual teaching missions there and the stewarding of theological education partnership through immersions for students both there and here.

Together the Persauds have made an indelible impression on three generations of Wartburg Theological Seminary students and graduates through their teaching, advising, and participation in students' formation process, to say nothing about their extensive influence on the life of the whole church through their speaking and writing.

Dr. May Burt Persaud—Instructor in Biblical Languages (Biblical Hebrew and New Testament Greek)—offered her extraordinary gifts for biblical languages to bless and prepare many students through her teaching both at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary and, for nearly forty years, at WTS. Those who have been recipients of her pedagogical gifts are consistently astounded by the wisdom, insights, and depth of her ponderings. Dr. May Persaud is a profound teacher of the Bible as God's Word. She also served as director at WTS for the most recent self-study processes and reaccreditation decisions with both the Association

of Theological Schools and the Higher Learning Commission. Through Dr. May Persaud's organization and diligence, WTS became a stronger school. During her years in Guyana, she also played a significant role in the life of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana at Redeemer Lutheran Church where Winston was pastor. These contributions were made from her deep piety in Jesus Christ and with self-effacing humility.

Together the Persauds have made an indelible impression on three generations of WTS students and graduates through their teaching, advising, and participation in students' formation process, to say nothing about their extensive influence on the life of the whole church through their speaking and writing. Both served as beloved advisors for many students, helping them run smartly between the wickets, sometimes very sticky ones! They were wise and trusted colleagues as members of a faculty division, at committee meetings (including globalization and internship), and monthly faculty meetings. Over the years, there have been countless trips to Kansas where they could tend to family connections, and where Prof. Winston Persaud served tirelessly on the Central States Synod candidacy committee.

Consider all the ripples of goodness and kindness set in motion by their ministries! Through it all, they brought winsomeness, humor, and sobriety to our seminary leadership. They also served in several other roles, too many to name, in leadership at WTS.

Winston and May have made a monumental impact not only on the history of WTS but on the greater Dubuque community. Their imprint on local neighbors includes the contributions of their sons, Winston Jr. and Alexander, to Dubuque and WTS. We pray for them many new ventures in teaching and ministry after retirement from WTS, when now there will be time to focus on their vocation as grandparents and other delights. With this *Festschrift* we express our profound gratitude for all God in Christ has been able to accomplish in and through them to further the mission of the Gospel. Winston and May Persaud have faithfully given leadership within the WTS community, the ELCA, and the church catholic to remain centered in the Gospel of Jesus Christ above all else. Through their witness to the Gospel, the mission of theological education has been strengthened through tumultuous times, and their legacy will continue to shine into the future.

Winston Dwarka Graham Persaud articulates a notion of faith that seeks to be attentive to several pitfalls of consumer spirituality. It rejects a faith that is conceived solely as marking an inner self, inattentive to its object, Jesus Christ, and forgetful of repentance. Instead, the author emphasizes the eccentric dimension of faith (both at its source and its object), its bodily transformative nature, and its inextricable link to repentance. In doing so, the argument challenges the notion of a contemporary consumer mentality that bends faith toward a self-owning and self-directed manner of being in the world.

Orin W. Cummings reflects on the life and work of the Persauds, whose four decades of faithful service and academic excellence have been devoted to advancing the Gospel. Their

legacy is characterized by lifelong pastoral leadership, cross-cultural engagement, and the equipping of future leaders through theological education and mentorship. Rooted in a deep love for Christ's body, their ministry has shaped minds and transformed generations, bridging continents and traditions. It stands as a testament to the enduring impact of the church's teaching and learning ministry, one that not only informs but builds knowledge and fosters commitment and sustainability.

Ann L. Fritschel holds that translating the Bible can be a spiritual practice. It begins by first reviewing key characteristics of the Hebrew language that aid in interpretation. It then develops a method of using internet tools to do word studies. This method can be used by those with little facility in biblical Hebrew. Insights from translation work are used in a manner like the *lectio divina* and the Ignatian Examen to go beyond initial impressions based on the English language. By dwelling at a relaxed pace in God's Word, one will draw closer to God and deepen one's faith.

Y. Franklin Ishida knows that cricket is a serious game for people like Winston Persaud, who has used this game to illustrate the critical nature of accompaniment in mission. This article explores how mission has transformed over the centuries to what it is today and employs Persaud's cricket metaphor to analyze the importance of mission in today's context. This analysis comes with the vital understanding that it is not simply the church in mission, but it is the *Missio Dei* that invites us into an accompanying God, becoming the church as mission as we accompany each other.

Allison R. deForest recalls translating Jeremiah 17:5-10 under May Persaud's tutelage and reflects on the meaning of this passage for our time. Jeremiah 17:5-8 can be considered part of Jeremiah's confessions or laments. Jeremiah can help readers today to understand the value of lament as a means of dialog and restoring relationships. Jeremiah can be understood as a "type" of Jesus. Jeremiah did indeed experience the blessings expressed in Jeremiah 17:8, as can all those who seek to speak a prophetic word today.

S.D. Giere revisits Genesis 1:1 by closely examining how the opening Hebrew word בְּרֵשִׁית (*b'reshit*) and its initial letter *bet* should be translated. This return to Genesis 1:1 is prompted by the shift in the NRSVue from "In the beginning God created" to "When God began to create." Through grammatical, syntactical, and historical analysis—drawing on Deutero-Isaiah, the Septuagint, Second Temple texts, rabbinic interpretation, modern biblical scholarship—the author argues that Genesis 1:1 is best read as an independent declaration of God's creation of all that is: matter, space, and time. This reading supports *creatio ex nihilo* as a viable and ancient Jewish interpretation rather than a later Christian imposition. The article concludes that preserving Genesis 1 as a creation story, rather than merely an origin story, is theologically important to affirm the sole sovereignty of the Triune God and the coherence of Christian claims about resurrection, new creation, and the Spirit's work of creating faith.

Kristin Johnston Largen argues for the continuing use of the word "evangelical," even in light of the negative connotations it has for many. The argument is based on the teaching, learning,

and embodiment of the true meaning of evangelical that belongs at the heart of the pastoral teaching ministry of the Rev. Dr. Winston Persaud, in his long career at Wartburg Seminary. For Professor Persaud, being evangelical encompassed the following four characteristics: trusting in the transformative power of the Holy Spirit, actively and regularly praying for others by name, being open-minded and openhearted with those with different beliefs, and living intentionally and explicitly in the name of Jesus.

Man Hei Yip witnesses that through his teaching, ministry and personal example, Dr. Winston Persaud taught students and colleagues to prioritize relationships, recalling that our genuine connection is rooted in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Reflecting on Dr. Persaud's consistent use of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed at the 1700th anniversary of its original composition, this article discusses how returning to the Creed offers a better understanding of ourselves as persons, our communities, and our Christian foundations. In such a dynamic, people discover that not only are they shaped by the tradition but also contribute to its ongoing transformation for the sake of faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in today's world.

Martin J. Lohrmann contends that Lutheran theology has from its beginning contained strong elements of religious experience, including experiences that might now be called spirituality, spiritual formation, and mysticism. While certainly "personal" for individual believers, in the Lutheran tradition the experience of salvation leads not to selfishness or isolation but to love of others as an invitation and immersion in caring about the world with the love that Christ has first given us. While spiritual experiences of prayer, catechesis, singing, and serving are by no means unique to the Lutheran tradition, Lutheran commitments to justification by faith alone and the concomitant reforms of worship offer a set of spiritual experiences that have distinctly shaped experiences of Christ's gospel.

H.S. Wilson observes that today followers of Jesus Christ, along with many other humans around the world, find themselves holding the world in their hands through the marvels of computing technology and Artificial Intelligence applications (AI). In such a context, church leaders need to prepare for the use of AI to support Christian ministry and mission in the present and in the technological future to come. Given the impact of these new technologies, leaders in theological education should be ready and empowered to influence a future in which AI devices possibly function more as guardian angels rather than harmful forces.

Thomas Franklin O'Meara recalls how the 1960s were a time of unexpected and considerable change in society and in Christian churches. In the autumn of 1961, ecumenism arose as a new and unexpected movement that began to influence Christianity in the United States, including communities in Dubuque, Iowa, where the author was first a student and then a professor. In this article, the author reflects on how local relationships in Dubuque both participated in and contributed to the global ecumenical movement, especially through Roman Catholic engagement with the Protestant theologian Paul Tillich.

There are two creative **Currents Focus** articles in this issue. Using the storytelling method from the popular podcast, The Moth Radio Hour, as a framework, **Heidi Francis** created a curriculum to teach people how to share their personal faith testimony in a way that is engaging, concise, and easy to remember. Instead of sharing one's whole life story, the storyteller learns how to identify one instance in their life and build a narrative around it. The goal is to draw in the listener by making them feel they are in the story with you, and leave them with a sense of curiosity, wanting to know more about the storyteller's faith experience.

C. T. Johnson contends that Jonah rejected and fled from his prophetic mission not because of any nationalistic ideology or the falsehood of his message but for two primary reasons. First, Jonah was unwilling to be a participant in God's salvation plan for Nineveh, embarking on a personal rebellion against his perception of inequity. Second, Jonah had a legitimate right to be angry at the atrocities of Assyria's past actions against Israel. Anyone who believes justice was not enforced has a right to be angry at its failures. To deny a person the right to be angry dismisses their grievance and therefore disarms equity.

Preaching Helps moves from Epiphany into Lent. While congregations will hear several chapters of Matthew (Year A Gospel) during Epiphany, John's gospel will have a major role during the Sundays in Lent. On those Lenten Sundays, we will hear some of the longest stories in the gospels. Jesus' encounter with a Samaritan woman in John 4 is the longest conversation he has with anyone. Lent can be a season for storytelling as the "Introduction to Preaching Helps" suggests—and just in time, Heidi Francis' **Focus** article in this issue of *Currents* offers encouragement and guidance for telling stories.

Speaking personally to conclude, my friendship with Winston that began during our seminary studies, was renewed as, alongside May, we served as faculty colleagues over thirty-one years. I give thanks for you two in the Name of Jesus Christ. To God be the glory!

Craig L. Nesson, Co-Editor, Currents in Theology and Mission
William D. Streng Professor for the Education
and Renewal of the Church
Professor of Contextual Theology and Ethics

2026 Ad Pricing and Specifications

The journal, *Currents in Theology and Mission*, is provided to readers as an online resource at <http://www.currentsjournal.org/index.php/currents>.

Individual articles are provided to readers as a PDF download. We offer advertising opportunities in any of our articles, with premium rates for sections with high readership, including the issue’s Introduction article, the Book Review section and the Preaching Helps section.

As advertisements are viewed online, they are visible to the reader in full color and allow live web-links. However, if a reader elects to print out the PDF, we do not have control over whether it is printed in color or black only.

Publication Dates and Deadlines

The journal, *Currents in Theology and Mission*, is published four times per year: January, April, July, and October. Ad deadlines for each issue are one month prior to publication (December 1, March 1, June 1, September 1). Late submissions may be published in the next issue. Issue-specific themes are available from the co-editors: [Craig Nesson](#) and [Kadi Billman](#).

Print Advertising Specifications

Please provide ads as an email attachment to our designer at kathryn@brewer-com.com.

- 300 dpi JPEG or PDF at full size.
- Color ads should be converted to CMYK.
- Embed all fonts when creating a PDF.

Size and Placement Options

Full page ads are placed at the end of articles. Fractional page ads are placed within articles. (We do not offer a bleed option.) You may specify an author, the Introduction article, or any of our sections: Book Reviews, Preaching Helps, Currents Focus. For specific article or section content per issue, please contact the co-editors: [Craig Nesson](#) and [Kadi Billman](#).

Premium placements are: at the end of the Introduction article, within Book Reviews, within Preaching Helps. These are our most popular sections.

FORMAT	SIZE	PREMIUM PLACEMENT	REGULAR PLACEMENT
• Full Page:	7.125” wide x 10” high	\$ 450	\$ 380
• One Column (vertical):	3.5” wide x 10” high	\$ 250	\$ 200
• Half Column:	3.5” wide x 4.75” high	\$ 135	\$ 115
• Half Page (horizontal):	7.125” wide x 4.75” high	\$ 250	\$ 200

25% discount for 4 consecutive placements from the same advertiser (content may change).

Website Advertising

We do not offer site advertising.

Billing

New advertisers must include payment with order. Checks should be made out to “Currents in Theology and Mission” and sent to: Currents in Theology and Mission, 5416 S. Cornell Avenue, 4th Floor, Chicago, IL 60615. For questions or to pay by credit card, call the editorial offices at 773-256-0705.

Returning Advertisers: Bills are sent after publication.