

Christian Conference of Asia (CCA)
National Council of Churches in India - Unity and Mission (NCCI)
Church of North India - Chota Nagpur Diocese (CNI -CND)
National Missionary Society of India (NMSI) and Indian Missions Association (IMA),

Indian Missional Conversation on Asia Mission Conference -2017

Theme: 'Journeying Together: Prophetic Witness to the Truth and Light, in Asia'

The theme of the Asia Mission Conference - 2017 'Journeying Together: Prophetic Witness to the Truth and Light, in Asia' is inspired by the Biblical verses illuminated in the Gospel of John, is rooted in the Asian context.

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me, will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

"I came into the world to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." (John 18:37).

Asia is a land of many cultures, world religions, philosophies and ideologies. The Asian Christians seek to bear witness to the truth and light that has been given to us to see, and illuminate the way forward. We, the Christians in Asia proclaim our message in a listening way (Matthew 16:13), as we accompany others bringing good news to the oppressed (Isaiah 61:1-2). We bear witness not as masters but as servants (Luke 17:7-10) we journey not to be served but to serve others (Mark 10:45). We announce the reign of God in a spirit of repentance (Matthew 4:17), embodying the spirituality of the cross and in a way of self-emptying (Philippians 2:5-8). We bear prophetic witness to the truth and light drawing on the Asian heritage, our rich cultural and religious traditions that bore witness to God in Christ, long before the missionary movement of the modern era (Colossians 1:15-20), and that which continues to bear prophetic witness today.

In India, Christianity has been engaged in its prophetic mission and witness for centuries. Indian Christians, very much part of India's rich heritage, culture and the varied pluralistic faith and ideological expressions, contributed immensely at every stage of its history. Indian contribution in every walk of socio-religious lives of the world is remarkable in which Christians are an integral part. This colourful attire of India is witnessed in the unity among faiths and religions that assures and promotes social harmony. India is seen as an 'icon' of unity and a 'beacon' of secularism.

The history of Christianity in India begins from the 1st century AD. The Christian mission since its inception has made humongous impact on nation building. Its missiological and diaconal interventions proclaim and fulfill the gospel-call in promoting and affirming life 'of' all and life 'for' all (John 10:10). Nevertheless, the works of the Indian Christian Missions have been overshadowed by the notion that portray, Christianity as a Western religion, an outcome of colonialism, an evangelizing religion aimed only at converting people, involving in aggressive mission of proselytisation and making India a Christian nation.

Christianity in India has been portrayed by the right wing fundamentalists as a religion of conquest. But the fact on official records remain that, even after 2000 years of Christian missiological and diaconal interventions, the Christian population comprises of only around 2.5% of the Indian population. This shows that the work of the Indian Christian mission focused on the transformation of lives by 'preaching' the gospel and 'doing' the gospel through education, health and developmental interventions. Unfortunately these solid contributions are darkened.

Since gospel of Christ directly confronted the social injustices such as caste discrimination, gender injustice and other social divides, and identified with socially, religiously, economically neglected, excluded and discriminated communities that are pushed to the fringes of the society.

The traditional understanding of mission is identified by preaching the gospel to the so-called 'unreached', 'unheard' and 'heathens' whereas, the Indian mission starts its mission by identifying with the socially, religiously, economically and politically marginalized, excluded and discriminated communities. This is the uniqueness of the mission of Jesus Christ.

While the Indian Christian mission is faced with unpleasant contextual realities the Christian organizations in India is inviting a group of selected theologians, missiologists and church and ecumenical organization representatives to reflect on the theme of the Asia Mission Conference -2017, *Journeying Together: Prophetic Witness to the Truth and Light in Asia*". This theme and its sub-themes, *Prophetic Accompaniment, Affirming the Servanthood, Participating in the reign of God, and Embodying the Spirituality of the Cross* are very much pertinent in today's Asian context. These themes are relevant when they are contextualized in the Indian missional experiences.

As the Asia Mission Conference approaches, it would be ideal for the Indian mission fraternity to not only reflect and contribute but also to espouse the uniqueness of the nature of Indian missions and expose the challenges to the wider mission contemporaries. This not only seeks the contribution to the Asia Mission Conference, but also helps us re-think and re-imagine our missional stand-points and goals for further missional deliberations for Christian mission in India.

At this juncture the National Council of Churches in India - Unity and Mission considers it an imperative to plan and organize a Conversation on Mission in the Indian context based on the theme of the Asia mission conference. The National Council of Churches in India - Unity and Mission (NCCI), Church of North India - Diocese of Chota Nagpur), National Missionary Society of India (NMSI), India Missions Association (IMA) and Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) are pleased to organise this Pre - Asia Mission Conference conversation of Indian Christian representatives, which would take place in Ranchi, on 23-24 August (from the afternoon of 23rd to the evening of 24th August 2017).

Aims and Objectives

- To reflect and contribute to the theme of the Asia Mission Conference-2017, from an Indian perspective;
- To provide a common platform for various mission agencies in India to converse the realities of our contexts and Missional praxis and contribute the Indian silage to the Asia Mission Conference and its theme as well as the proposed Asia Mission Conference Statement.
- To theologize a missional framework relevant in a multi-religious Asian context.

Organizers

- Christian Conference of Asia (CCA)
- National Council of Churches in India – Unity and Mission,
- CNI - Chota Nagpur Diocese
- National Missionary Society of India (NMSI),
- India Missions Association (IMA),

Facilitation - National Council of Churches in India – Unity and Mission

Venue: Ranchi

Date: 23rd to 24th August 2017

Participants

- 75 Participants (including Mission workers from the church Mission board/Mission organizations, Theological Faculty and Students, Community/Social Activists, Socio-Political Scientists, Academicians, Church and Ecumenical Leaders).

Suggested Program Framework

- Scanning the Indian Context from Political/Religious/Social and Media Perspectives
- Listening to Academicians/Activists/Mission workers
- Studying and Responding to the Asia Mission Conference Draft Statement

Yours in God's Mission

Rev. Christopher Vijayan
General Secretary
National Missionary Society
Rev. R. Christopher Rajkumar
Executive Secretary, Unity and Mission
National Council of Churches in India

Rev. Dr. Wati Longkumer
General Secretary
India Missions Association
Rev. Jojjas Kujur
Diocesan Secretary
CNI Chota Nagpur Diocese

Please find the attached REGISTRATION FORM and revert back the duly filled form on or before July 25, 2017 to

Rev. R. Christopher Rajkumar,
Executive Secretary, NCCI - Unity & Mission,
National Council of Churches in India,
Post Box 205, Civil Lines, Nagpur - 440001, Maharashtra.
either by snail mail or email to <mission@ncci1914.com>