

Indian Christian Conversations on World Mission Conference - 2018
Theme: **'Transforming Discipleship: Mission of the Missions'**

The theme of the World Mission Conference (WMC) - 2018 is "Moving in the Spirit: Called to Transforming Discipleship." This would be held in Arusha, Tanzania from 8 -13 March 2018. In fact, the Indian Churches and the Mission Movements hosted the third World Mission Conference in Tambaram, Tamilnadu, India in 1938. The Tambaram Conference focused on the importance of "Churches in Mission" and affirmed the Christian Message i.e. Life in Fullness (John 10:10) and proposed dialogical mission approaches with our neighbours and neighbourhood.

WMC – 2018 paves the way for the Indian Churches and Mission Movements to consider our mission journeys and to examine how much we have impacted the Indian Societies at large through the dialogue approach.

Asian and Global Mission Concerns

In fact we live in a world that that needs a lot of missional interventions. Today's mission requires a new way of understanding the world / society. Accordingly we need to discern afresh the role of Church Leaders, Mission Workers, and the laity at large in mission. There are numerous mission movements in our land. We have been working for centuries in communicating the gospel by adopting several missional and diaconal interventions. But still, we are yet to appropriately position the Gospel of Christ that affirms life 'of' all - life 'for' all.

The recently held Asia Mission Conference (Oct 2017) suggested and invited all the Asian Churches and Mission Movements to 'DO GOSPEL' and suggested a shift from Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) to Great Commandment (Mark 12:28-31).

The World Mission Conference - 2018 also aims at exploring the meaning - role of congregations (the Church) in mission work. 'Discipleship' or 'making disciples' is a popular mission agenda for churches and missions. Therefore, the WMC would like to encourage the global Christian communities and mission fraternities to contemplate on mission methods of discipleship where people would involve in transformative mission with the help of the Holy Spirit. The WMC has been inspired by the Jesus' model of promoting discipleship as he reached out to people who had been socially, religiously, economically, politically and traditionally rejected by the dominant society: Jesus was impacted by their struggles and hopes and he responded to them by identifying with them, expressing solidarity with them, healing and empowering them to give expression to the reign of God. Therefore mission means being open to being changed ("transformed") in response to what churches learn from the people at the margins of society with whom they are working, the WMC says. Further, the WMC asserts one needs to be open to the movement of the Spirit in current times and to the heart of the Christian faith, which calls for people to be willing to take risks for their beliefs.

Indian Mission Concerns

Indian Churches and Mission Movement have been engaged in mission through evangelism and diaconia for centuries. Indian Christians - very much part of India's rich heritage, culture and the varied pluralistic faith and ideological expressions – have also made significant contributions at different stages of India's history. Nevertheless, the contributions of Indian Christian Missions have been overshadowed by communal stereotyping that portrays Christianity as a Western religion, an outcome of colonialism, an evangelizing religion aimed only at converting people, involving in aggressive mission of proselytization and making India a Christian nation.

Christianity in India has been portrayed by the right wing fundamentalists as a religion of conquest. But official records bear witness to the fact that, even after 2000 years of Christian missiological and diaconal interventions, Indian Christians comprise only around 2.5% of the Indian population. Indian Christian missions have largely focused on the transformation of lives by 'preaching' the gospel and 'doing' the gospel through education, health and developmental interventions. It is regrettable that these constructive contributions are being deliberately overlooked. The gospel of Christ has 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. Fundamentalist right wing forces deliberately distort such reforming and transforming engagements of Indian Christian Missions.

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

Indian Christian Mission Conversations - 2018

It is in the midst of contemporary contextual challenges, it is essential for a group of selected theologians, missiologists and church and ecumenical organization representatives to reflect on the theme 'Transforming Discipleship: Mission of the Missions'.

At this juncture 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 helps us to contribute to the World Mission Conference, but also enables us re-think and re-imagine our missional stand-points and goals for further missional deliberations for Christian mission in India.

Therefore, the National Council of Churches in India - Unity and mission considers it imperative to plan and organize a Missional Consultation in the Indian context along with the Church of North India - Synod and the WCC - Council for World Mission and Evangelism, based on the theme of the WMC - 2018. This conversation will take place in CNI Bhavan, #, 16, Pandit Pant Marg, New Delhi, from 24-26 January 2018.

Aims and Objectives

- To reflect upon, and contribute to the theme of the World Mission Conference, from an Indian perspective;
- To provide a common platform for various mission agencies in India to converse upon the realities of our contexts and missional praxes, and to contribute the Indian silage to the World Mission Conference and its theme as well as to suggest the inclusion of the Indian Missional Concerns in their missional priorities; and
- To articulate a missiological framework relevant in the multi-religious Asian context.

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

Venue: CNI Bhavan, # 16, Pandit Pant Marg, New Delhi.

Date: 24th to 26th January 2018

Participants

- 40 Participants (including Mission workers from the Church Mission boards/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
- Suggesting proposals to the World Mission Conference 2018

Yours in God's Mission,

Shri. Alwan Masih

General Secretary
Church of North India Synod

Rev. R. Christopher Rajkumar

Executive Secretary, Unity and Mission
National Council of Churches in India

Most. Rev. Dr. P C Singh

President - NCCI
Moderator - Church of North India Synod

Rev. Dr. Roger Gaikwad

General Secretary
National Council of Churches in India

Please find the attached REGISTRATION FORM and revert back the duly filled form on or before December 15, 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/ <mission@ncci1914.com>