



Christian Conference of Asia

Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS) – IX

'Reconciliation, Renewal and Restoration: Divine Indicative and Human Imperative'

**Ambepussa, Kandy, Sri Lanka
5 – 10 August, 2019**

The Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) invites nominations/applications to join the forthcoming Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS -IX), which will be held from 5 to 10 August, 2019 in Ambepussa, Kandy, Sri Lanka. Initiated by the Christian Conference of Asia in 1997, the CATS had VIII biannual / triennial Asian theologians' summit during the past 22 years.

The theme of CATS-IX will be:

'Reconciliation, Renewal, and Restoration: Divine Initiative and Human Imperative'

Subthemes:

- ***Reconciliation: Towards the harmony of creation***
- ***Renewal: Towards the fullness of life***
- ***Restoration: Towards affirming the will of God.***

CATS IX will provide a platform for budding Asian theologians to engage in a multidimensional and multidisciplinary theological method, initiating new paradigms of reconciliation, renewal, and restoration in the Asian contexts.

The theme of CATS- IX is rooted and focused on the ecumenical theological contexts in Asia amidst several emerging and challenging issues in relation to the social, political, religious, economic and ecological issues. The theological vision is that God's works of reconciliation, renewal, and restoration are ongoing processes and inseparably interconnected with each other. For instance, while reconciliation takes place, simultaneously there is a renewal and a process of restoration as well. The same is true with renewal and restoration. God calls us to participate in the mission of reconciliation, renewal, and restoration, and ensures positive transformation in the world. Reconciliation is the desire to return to the bond with God, and at every situation, reconciliation is rooted in the spirit of love. The longing of every person should be comfortable with God to receive God's assurance of the fullness of life. Reconciliation opens our hearts to listen to the voice of God and the cries of our neighbours. Reconciliation in Christ is the path to the restoration of the broken relationship and friendship with God as persons and as a community.

God who cares and recognises the entire human family as children of God (Romans 8) makes people a new creation through Jesus, who assures his children that the only path to reconciliation with God is through reconciliation with each other on earth, and the members of the entire human family (Eph. 2: 2-11, Eph. 1: 10).

In the light of an ongoing process of dynamic and positive transformation, Asian Christians and theologians are called and challenged to be engaged with multidisciplinary Asian theological methods, initiating new paradigms of reconciliation towards the harmony of creation; renewal towards the fullness of life; and restoration towards

affirming the will of God in the context of Asia's emerging challenges and participation in God's mission.

Divine Indicative and Human Imperative

We need to realize and respond to the divine indicative as human imperative. Theologically, the imperative calls on believers to live in a certain way, for example, in a Godly manner. This is the believer's side of the equation as a response to God's indicative. We are conscious of the fact that God works and has worked, therefore, we must and can work. As per the New Testament, the imperative is rooted within the indicative of God's act and is part of God's gracious act. This is what St. Paul reminded the Corinthians: "Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb has been sacrificed. (1 Corinthians 5:6-7). Christ our Passover lamb constantly reminds us about reconciliation, renewal, and restoration.

Reconciliation: Towards the harmony of creation: This subtheme addresses the multidimensional aspects of reconciliation, and the harmony of creation. This includes ranging from individual to international levels, focusing on restoration of God's *Oikos*, healing the wounded and the broken world. Christ the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation reconciled "things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities" (Colossians 1:15–20). God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting our sins and he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. The reconciliation in every context is a way leading to perfect harmony through the work of reconciliation on the cross. Christian theology affirms the reconciliation that reconnects us to God, to other humans, and to creation. It has to come from outside ourselves, from something other than the conflicted self or community, from a love that knows no interest except the interest of the other. The source of this love is the Triune God, who exists in an eternal relation of giving and giving back, of offering and accepting, of generosity and receptivity.

Renewal: Towards the fullness of life: Renewal means the ongoing process of renewing, resuming something after interruption, resumption, recommencement, the continuation of work, re-establishment, restoring to a former state after decay or deprivation, rebuilding and repairing and more. The second sub-theme 'Renewal : Towards the fullness of life' will concentrate on the multidimensional renewal of God who works towards the fullness of life, ranging from individual to global issues, focusing on the abundant life, renewal of spiritual life, healing of the sick, the healing of the broken life, the disabled people, the HIV/AIDS infected people, to be in solidarity with migrants, stateless, refugees and IDPs towards reconciliation with the existing authorities towards the fullness of life and so forth.

Restoration: Towards affirming the will of God: Restoration indicates the ongoing process of bringing back to the original state, rebuilding, reviving, bringing back to life, reestablishment after interruption; making peace between two or more parties. This subtheme will deal with the issues of multidimensional restoration of affirming the will of God, ranging from individual to international levels, focusing on restoration of the dignity of the excluded, marginalized, the outcasts, the rights of the trafficked people and the migrant workers, the liberation from modern slavery, building peaceful co-existence of ethnic groups or any restoration that affirms the will of God. The contemporary social, political, economic, religious and ecological issues are threatening Asian societies, and a wide span of issues has affected Asia's harmonious situation: poverty, unemployment, stateless and homeless people, forced migration, internal displacement, human trafficking, gender-based discrimination, ethnic conflicts, civil war, militarization, arms race, religious intolerance, ecological crisis. In the midst of numerous adversities, we are called to participate in the mission of healing the wounded and the broken world. Participating in God's mission of building the reign of God, by reconciling, renewing and restoring all things.

It is in this background that we are encouraged to look for contextual hermeneutics and new theological paradigms, and models of ecumenical engagements in addressing various concerns related to the dimensions of reconciliation, renewal, and restoration of the wounded creation and the broken world. What Asian churches and Christianity need in this context are theologies relevant in addressing the Asian realities in a meaningful way and a firm theological position against every damaging situation that is contrary to reconciliation, restoration, and renewal.

Criteria for Application and Participation in CATS –IX

Participants will have the opportunities to contribute academic papers on a relevant topic related to the theme of sub-theme of CATS-IX at a seminar session. Those who are interested to present papers at CATS -IX, should send the synopsis of their paper (approximately 100 words) they intend to present at CATS –IX. The final version of the paper is expected to be presented during the CATS-IX.

Venue, board and lodging

The venue of CATS - IX will be at Ambepussa, Kandy, Sri Lanka.

CCA will provide the hospitality (board and lodging as well as airport pick-up and drop) of all selected participants. Selected participants are expected to arrange their own travel costs to Sri Lanka and return by themselves or by sponsoring institutions/ churches.

Travel Bursaries

Limited travel bursaries will be arranged by CCA to participants from South and South East Asian countries upon requests.

Registration Fee

1. For Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Australia, New Zealand \$100
2. For India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, and Iran \$50.
3. For Cambodia, Laos, East Timor, Vietnam, Nepal, and Bhutan \$10.

The deadline for receiving the applications will be on 31 May 2019. Selected applicants will be informed by 10 June 2019.

For further details, please contact:

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