

Second International Research Conference on ‘Christian Studies’ (IRCCS II)

‘Doing Public Theologies in Asia: Prospects and Challenges’

Jointly Organized by the Faculty of Graduate Studies (Master of Christian Studies) of the University of Jaffna and the Asian Network for Public Theology (hybrid modes)

The second international research conference on ‘Christian Studies’ at the University of Jaffna is proposed to be organized by the Christian Studies of the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Jaffna in collaboration with the Asian Network for Public Theology to be held on the **01st and 02nd of February 2024**.

Core Theme

‘Public Theologies in Challenging Times’

History

The first international research conference on ‘Christian Studies’ at the University of Jaffna was organized by the **Department of Christian Civilization** in collaboration with the **Centre for Performing Arts, Jaffna** and took place on the 7th and 8th of December 2018. As a continuation, the second in the series is to be organized by the Department of Christian Civilization which offers the ‘Masters of Christian Studies’ at the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Jaffna in collaboration with the Asian Network for Public Theology. It is scheduled to be held on the 01st and 02nd of February 2024.

Aim:

Christianity has indeed been a significant role player in the Asian context in the different domains associated with public life and common good of all the people without any discrimination. The second international research conference on ‘Christian Studies’, therefore, aims to provide a platform to document with scientific methodical research the efforts of Christianity which, among other things has indeed played a significant role in nurturing the rudiments of democracy and upliftment of the social and economic conditions in Sri Lanka as well as in different countries of Asia.

Objectives:

Basing on this aim, the objectives of the research conference are stipulated as follows:

- to assess role of Christianity in nurturing the rudiments of democracy and upliftment of the social and economic conditions in Asian countries
- to examine the response of Christianity to the new normalcy and the ‘signs of the time’
- to appraise the contribution of Christianity to the nurturance of democratic polity, public reason, common good, civil rights, noble citizenship, social justice and peace in the world especially in Asia
- evaluate the contribution of Christianity to safeguard the values of local cultures, art and literature from destruction in the verge of the modern trend of colonization and in the postmodern trend of globalization

- to revisit the history of Christianity in the local contexts with its solidarity with the poor and the marginalized for their economic and social empowerment
- to create the theological soundness in doing public theologies in the varying political and public contexts of Asian countries

The present world order with varied conflicts, violence, injustice, discriminations, anti-life concepts and practices, individualism, evil effects of globalization and pervasive environmental challenges has created a new scenario. In such a milieu, responding to the 'signs of the time', Christianity in the Asian countries is called upon to play a creative, active and meaningful role in the wider public, to contribute to the nurturance of democratic polity, public reason, common good, civil rights, noble citizenship, social justice and peace. In this way, the conference will raise awareness of the responsibility that Christianity together with other religions have to be a partaker of a 'silent revolution' of the subaltern people by educating and imparting awareness of civil and human rights, with its role to the emergence of an inchoate public sphere, and with its solidarity with the poor and the marginalized for their economic and social empowerment. These historical contributions make Asian Christianity even more responsible for the continuous maturing of democracy and alleviation of social evils especially amidst the contemporary challenges. It would help re-envision the self-identity of Christian religion as a public body with a renewed understanding of its relationship with the state, religious others, civil society and individuals. By way of initiating this public theology, Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Jaffna in collaboration with the Asian Network for Public Theology, is organizing an international conference.

About the Organizers

- Faculty of Graduate Studies (Master of Christian Studies)

The Faculty of Graduate Studies is one of the eleven faculties of the University of Jaffna. It is offering a taught course, namely 'Master of Christian Studies' which is academically coordinated by the Department of Christian Civilization of the same university. Thus the Faculty of Graduate Studies and the Department of Christian Civilization of the University of Jaffna become the local organizers of the conference.

- Asian Network for Public Theology

The Asian Network for Public Theology is a newly constituted regional wing of the Global Network for Public Theology (GNPT), which is the largest network of higher education institutions researching on public theology. As a network having member institutions from all continents, GNPT fosters scholarly exchange about the contribution of Christianity to public discourse on contemporary concerns. (ref. gnpublictheology.net) And, it also helps run the *International Journal of Public Theology* published by BRILL.

Modality of the Conference

The conference will be held in hybrid mode, virtual and direct participation. The organizers will make arrangements to host the onsite and online participants.

Some Samples of Sub Themes

The following list of sub themes certainly is not exhaustive. Those interested may find their own sub themes.

1. Religions and Ideologies for Common Good
2. Public theology: concept, history and relevance for Asian countries
3. Social Teachings of the Churches: Public Theological Explorations
4. Bible as a Public Book: Asian Perspectives
5. Dialogue of Cultures and Religions: Prospects and Challenges
6. Dialogue of Science and Religions, and Public Policies in Asia
7. Asian Christianities and Asian States
8. The Minority Question as Addressed by Christianity in Asia
9. Gender Question addressed by Asian Christianity
10. Asian Christianity and Religious Pluralism
11. Asian Christianity and Civil Society
12. Christianity and Education in Asian Countries
13. Religions and Public Spheres in Asia
14. Doing public theology of life in slums
15. Sri Lankan Christianity and its local context

Call for Papers

As a first step, a call is made herewith to submit paper proposals of not more than 500 words, touching upon various aspects of the conference theme. Papers will be accepted from the international and local scholars in the field of public theology, reflecting their own context. In the proposal please indicate the modality of your participation, whether onsite or online.

Important Dates: (GMT + 5:30)

Proposal Deadline: 30 October 2023

Proposal Acceptance Notification: 15 November 2023

Full Paper Deadline: 15 January 2024

Early Bird Registration Deadline: 20 January 2024

Participant Registration Deadline: 25 January 2024

Inauguration of the Conference: 01 February 2024

Conference Registration Fee

SAARC Presenters: 10 US \$ (both online and offline)

Other International Presenters: 20 US \$ (both online and offline)

Local Presenters (National ID is necessary): LKR 2500/-

Local Students: LKR 1000/-

(Mode of the payment of registration will be notified)

Accommodation Facilities

The onsite presenters will be helped to find accommodation. Details will follow.

The Organizing Committee

University of Jaffna

Prof. S. Kannathan

Prof. J.C. Paul Rohan
Asian Network for Public theology
Emeritus Prof. Gnana Patrick (University of Madras, India)
Prof. Lap Yan Kung (Chung Chi College, Hong Kong)

Advisory Committee

Rev. Prof. A.J.V. Chandrakanthan, (University of Toronto / Ont. Canada)
Rev. Dr. A.F. Jayasegaram (Director / *Neithalam* Centre)
Rev. Fr. M.V.E. Ravichandran (Senior Lecturer / Dept. of Christian Civilization, UoJ)

Cyber Advisor

Dr. E.Y.A. Charles (Dept. of Computer Science, UoJ)

Treasurer

Mrs. M.W. Surendraraj (Senior Lecturer / Dept. of Christian Civilization, UoJ)

Publication Details

The abstracts will be published in the Proceedings of the Research Conference and distributed on the final day of the conference. Full papers will be published with standard publishers after incorporating the evaluations given during the presentation.

Contact Details (Clarifications and Sending the Proposals)

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