

Parallel Session III

14h00-15h30

Venue: K2:003 (New Auditorium of Faculty of Social Science)

Chair: Ms. Dinali Fernando

Revisiting Luther: The Challenges to the Evangelical Churches with special reference to Assembly of God Church in Sri Lanka

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The intention of Luther was not to create a separate Church or to divide the Church but, through intellectual inquiry and dialog to bring about changes so that his Church could reform its erroneous deeds, activities and scandalous to the Gospel teaching and Christian witness. He desired an open Church to what his contemporary world was going through. His query, thought and pursuit of changes unfortunately brought about a dissension within the church. What is now known as the Protestant movement began with his suggestion for church renewal. Many churches and Christian groups have emerged since Reformation (from 1517 – 2017), a period of 500 years.

The aim of this paper is to identify the challenges of ‘Lutheran reforms’ thinking and its effects on the ecclesiastical structures and practice of the Assemblies of God Church in contemporary Sri Lanka. The paper focuses on the following areas:

- What caused Martin Luther to seek renewal within his own Church (reforms)?
- Why did the Church divide rather than reform?
- What is the importance of Luther’s reformation ideas for the Assemblies of God Church today for practice and Christian witness?

The paper intends to draw some of the most influential areas of Lutheran reforms in the development of the Evangelical churches over a long period of time with a special focus on the origins, expansion, life and practice of the Assembly of God church in Sri Lanka

Key words: Luther’s thinking, Reformation, Evangelical Churches, Assembly of God Church

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