

The 36th European-Japanese Christian Conference in Cluj-Napoca, Romania

“Living as a liberated person” – in the 30th Anniversary after the Liberation in East Europe

You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. Galater 5, 13 (NIV)

Welcome to the “Tsudoi”—the 36th European-Japanese Christian Conference!

I am so grateful to have the conference take place in Cluj-Napoca, the central city of the beautiful province of Transylvania in Romania, which celebrates the 30th anniversary of the liberation in Eastern Europe.

30 years ago, Europe was divided by two political ideas, and several years have passed, since Europe became one as the European Union. Now in Eastern Europe, that time is slowly being forgotten as a “past” occurrence, when the freedom of speech or thought was restricted. Therefore, for this year’s conference, the theme “Living as a liberated person” was chosen, so that we, who are used to the freedom and release, shall remember once again this important fact, and keep it in our hearts forever in memory of this conference.

As opposed to the worldly affairs, which have changed over mere thirty years, the evangelical essence, which is told and spread invariably for two thousand years, was based on the liberation through the cross. I thus sincerely hope that all participants may lift their eyes to this important grace once more through this conference, and will recognize this essential fact, which we must never forget.

As the first Japanese, I, who has come to this town of nothing after the Revolution 30 years ago, would like to see the wonderful works of the Lord, who is active in this town even in this very moment, also through this conference, along with all participants.

With gratitude and prayers,

Rev. Katsutaro Kawai

Guidance

About the hotel:

The reception, the lobby, the main venue of the events (FORUM), and the baby-sitting room are located on the floor “P”.

The banquet room “ROMA” as the dining room for this conference is located on the floor “M”. (See pages 26 and 27.)

Those participants who stay overnight at this hotel before and/or after the conference: Please pay your accommodation fee for those extra nights at the hotel reception on the last day when you check out of the hotel.

The tap water in this hotel is drinkable.

Free Wi-Fi is available on each floor.

Foreign exchange is not possible in the hotel. However, you can withdraw Romanian Lei from the ATM at the reception. Furthermore, there are a number of foreign exchange counters in the town. Please exchange money only after confirming “commission 0”.

The business hours of the foreign exchange counters marked on page 13 are:

E1: Daily 9:00 – 18:00

E2: Mon.- Fri. 9:00 – 17:00, Sat. 9:00 – 13:00

E3: Mon.- Sat. 9:00 – 17:00

About the sessions:

Please ensure you arrive 5 minutes prior to the begin of each session. Chairs have been prepared according to the number of participants, so please take a seat from the front rows, not from the back -- Thank you.

About the small groups:

There are “sharing time” opportunities in both of the sessions on Friday, July 26th (in the morning and in the evening). There are 17 Japanese groups, 1 English, and 1 German group.

All the Japanese groups are held in the FORUM, the English-speaking participants have their “sharing time” spot at the front of the FORUM entrance, and for the

German-speakers, please use the sofas in the lobby. Please check the locations on page 26.

About the free time:

There is “free time” between 13:15 and 18:00 on both days, Friday July 26 and Saturday July 27. On both days you can join the city tour walk, if you like. Please meet up at the hotel entrance on level “P” at 13:30.

We will guide you to the highlights of the city for about 1.5 hours and will end the guided tour at the “Turnul Croitorilor” building, where the Japanese Culture Events are held. Please return to the hotel anytime by yourself from there after the tour. Please make sure to obtain a free city map from the reception on the first day.

The pre-booked tour to the salt mine in Turda will also take place on both days, Friday July 26 and Saturday July 27. Participation is limited to those who made reservations in advance.

Crucifixion

The scene of crucifixion is in the centre of all windows and illustrates the Bible's essential topic - the work of salvation. All other pictures start out from this central scene, to the right, important events of early church history, and to the left, scenes pertaining to the Old and New Testament.

We see the crosses on Calvary standing in front of Jerusalem's city walls.

The picture is purposely kept plain in order to keep the focus on the main message. Three crosses stand at Jesus' crucifixion on Calvary, on the left and right side are the crosses of the criminals being crucified with Jesus.

Calvary is the place of decision. One of the villains received Jesus and believed Him in order to enter God's new world. The other one, however, refused Him and derided God.

One man receives Jesus – the right cross' vertical bar uninterruptedly runs from the bottom up. The other man rejects Jesus – the left cross' horizontal bar cuts through the vertical bar, depicting that the line into heaven is capped.

The two travellers with the crooks are likewise positioned. The left one turns away, the right one directs him self towards the cross and thereby to the centre, to Jesus.

Similarly, we can travel with them in our thoughts, and in this journey, we will encounter Jesus. Will we turn away and walk on by, or will we look to Him, stay with Him?

Beneath the cross in the centre, there is a fish. Jesus Himself pointed to it (Matthew 12:40). Before His resurrection, Jesus will spend three days and nights in the depth of the earth in the same way as Jonah spent three days and nights deep inside the big fish. This was the only sign given to the evil and godless people who asked Jesus for a miracle. For the believer, the fish is a symbol for the hope of resurrection.

Jesus' death on Calvary is not the end as we see God's work of salvation behind Jesus' cross. In the same way, as the curtain in the temple was torn at Jesus' hour of death, God's open door, here visible in the city gate of Jerusalem, gives us a glimpse of God's glory. We can come to God because the way is open through Christ's death.

The three primary colours, yellow, red and blue, in the circle above the cross symbolize the triune God. When these three light colours unite, they form white, the colour, which contains all other colours, just as God is all in all - God Father, Son and Spirit. They are deeply united, but in the hour of death they will be torn. God gives His only begotten Son but this is only the beginning of a new chapter. In the morning of resurrection, the unity is restored, and everyone who believes in God has open access to Him.

Symbolised by the rising sun above the cross, the resurrection shines into our time. God has created everything, and here, in the sun, all lines converge in one point and have their origin. God Himself has created the opportunity of salvation for all of us, you and me, through Jesus' death and resurrection.

Mr. Fujio Watanabe