

# FTEAP Trainer's Workshop

## Notes and Evaluation

Nurturing Together the Growth of an Inclusive Community in Theological Education

03-06 July 2024

### Wednesday, 03 July

**First Topic: Personal and Institutional journeys – what are you/your school/region working on in terms of what you would identify as possibilities and challenges.**

#### GROUP 1

Indonesia Jakarta Theological Seminary: first to talk about women, gender, LGBTQI+. Possibilities: women's rights and equality; inclusivity, interfaith collaboration with communities and NGOs (eg. transwomen's group). Challenge: only conversation in academy, can't take to public or in churches (even those with women clergy) – don't ask, don't tell. Once tried a public event, received threats and had to cancel. Focus on self-love and this seminary as a safe space. Want to focus on transformation through education. Planting seeds. International consultations since 2018 and center on gender, sexuality, and trauma.

Indian context: Varied religious responses –negative views in Hindu and Muslim traditions. Some opening in Xian traditions. NCC in India has taken the issue up for 10 years. They offer classes to churches, including laity. Had a consultation in Kolkata (Serampore and NCC).

May make the course on sexuality required.

Transgender people attending the youth meeting in Kerala.

Next step: can Serampore make space for transgender students? Can they admit students with HIV/AIDS?

Myanmar: Integrate feminist studies and gender studies; women's fellowship for female students; MIT has gender studies center that students can take classes at. Baptist church is less open. It ordains women. Aye Maw addresses gender and sexuality in sermons. Younger generation is more open. Kachin Baptists do not ordain women.

Philippines: Methodist and UCC in Philippines was split till 2024, due to shift in Methodist language. Next few years will see shifts in Methodist congregations. Union's

advocacy stance is very clear. Need to focus more on pleasure, positive aspects of the body, etc. The church is one of the most unsafe places. Theology of sin is a challenge.

Group Discussion: Example of United Methodists: what are we willing to lose in order to move forward?

### **GROUP 3**

- The group affirms that as gender is a social construct, so is sexuality.
- Group felt that based on the context, women's equality is still an issue and there is a long way to go in dealing with the issues of LGBTQ+ (Nepal)
- Women are found more than 50% in the theological education. Government forces young men to join military and women are joining for ministry. Women are presidents at MIT. The country looks for academic excellence rather than gender. As many fundamental leaders died during Covid -19, youngsters are into ministry with more open mindedness. Gay people are in leadership. Buddhism is open to LGBTQ+ issues and allows same sex marriages. Methodist church has announced its acceptance for same sex marriage. (Myanmar)
- Society is ready to accept LGBTQ+ but not the church
- Pastors need to pay attention to the grassroots
- Counselling, praying, bringing awareness and being with people can help the LGBTQ+ communities.

### **GROUP 4**

First Topic: Personal and Institutional Journeys, Identifying possibilities and challenges

- Serampore has already started Human Sexuality Subject at the university. Factors  
1. Lack of teachers/expertise. From the student and teacher's side. There also can be a stigma to teachers as well as students. The faculty does not often agree about the initiative. This is from the academic side. From the church side, the challenge is not different. The Church refused to talk about sexual orientation. LGBTQI has many areas that have no problem as long as the person does not identify as gay or lesbian and so on. If the church does not support the students, they will have future problems.

Among the 2000

- South Korra: Hansin theology school: In Korean society, gender equality is accepted only on a small and rare occasion; when it comes to the relationship between our

university and society, it is a big challenge if we talk openly about gender equality.

- Since the beginning of 1992, feminist theology has been introduced to some universities and seminaries but it is compulsory. The policy still depends on the institution especially if the school runs by such a synod. At Jakarta Theological Seminary, we provide studies and also room for the student to express their gender and sexual identity. The big challenge for them is how long this will take because, in the end, they have to go back to their home church. Some return but without identify who they really are, and some decide to go on their own way (meaning, not going back to the church and the family).

- Wati: (1) the economic reason behind this condition. Leaders of the church do not all reject a person from a different sex orientation but they cannot leave it open/or show it because they don't want to lose their income. (2) In India when government start to revise its regulation, some religious institution opposed it. Only a small number of people, including me, tried to come up with a justice theme by sharing some journals to influence the decision.

- Swarup Bar: (1). When forced by society, I think some churches have to think about what they have to put in local policies especially if it is pushed by civil society organizations. (2) Pastor who marry the same sex couple but the respect still there for people, so that's the balance.

- Thailand: church is more backward in this country.

- Chan: personal sharing (from PCK) even if we have friends with different orientations, they cannot openly say that they befriend them because it is dangerous. In Taiwan and Tainan seminary, they don't have a sexual equality curriculum. We need to care for people from different communities.

- STFTJ Principal; this seminary is the most open about LGBTIQ. We are labeled by others as too liberal (curriculum and action). The principle we used here it's ok if you are different as long as you are responsible for what you do and as long as you can defend your opinion. Churches who support us have different opinions, but we try to navigate the relationship (to keep the balance). If the church sends them (even person with different sexual orientations) we have to respect and leave their individual/personal business.

- Serampore has already started Human Sexuality Subject at the university. But many colleges do not offer the course. Why? The lack of teachers/expertise. Due to lack of clear institutional policies students and teachers who support the issue are discriminated and churches do not use those people. Majority of the faculty do not support LGBTIQ communities due to lack of biblical understanding and cultural factors. From the church side, the challenge is not different. Church refused to talk about sexual orientation. As long as the person does not identify as gay or lesbian, they seem to be

ok, but once a person is an identify transgender both the church and theological insitutions find it difficult to accept.

In Korean society, gender equality is accepted only on a small and rare occasion; when it comes to the relationship between our university and society, it is a big challenge if we talk openly about gender equality. LGBTIQ+ issue is still yet to address and there is no clear institutional policies.

- Since the beginning of 1992, feminist theology has been introduced to some universities and seminaries but it is compulsory. The policy still depends on the institution especially if the school runs by such a synod. At Jakarta Theological Seminary, we provide studies and also space for the student to express their gender and sexual identity. The big challenge for them is how long this will take because, in the end, they have to go back to their home church. Some return but without identify who they really are, and some decide to go on their own way (meaning, not going back to the church and the family).
- Some leaders of the church do recognize the importance of giving pastoral care but ordination in the church. many church leaders do not agree when it comes to same sex marriage. In India when government wish to legislate the same sax marriage, but religious institutions opposed it. Only a small number of people, tried to come up with a justice theme by sharing some journals to influence the decision.
- When forced by society, I think some churches have to think about what they have to put in local policies especially if it is pushed by civil society organizations.
- In many countries in Asia, church is far behind the civil society and government due to religious teaching.
- If we have friends with different orientations, they cannot openly say that they are friends in public openly because of discrimination. In Taiwan and Tainan seminary, they don't have a sexual equality curriculum. We need to care for people from different communities.
- In STFTJ is open about LGBTIQ. That is why many people labeled as liberal (curriculum and action). The principle we used here it's ok if you are different as long as you are responsible for what you do and as long as you can defend your opinion. Churches who support us have different opinions, but we try to navigate the relationship (to keep the balance). If the church sends them (even person with different sexual orientations) we have to respect and leave their individual/personal business.

## GROUP 5

We are from 4 different countries: Indonesia, the Philippines, India, and Thailand. We have almost the same struggle, namely domestic violence and gender and sexuality issues. Some of us are in a position of policy-making whether in an institution (campus) or an organization– which is one possibility of making a difference. We strive to find ways to relevance to the theory and practice of justice, especially on gender and sexuality issues in the midst of communities. We also integrate gender and sexuality issues or feminist perspectives in our curriculum, policies (include code of conduct), and daily behavior; and collaborate with seminaries or organizations that have the same concerns. We also think about how stakeholders (student or organization member) in our community implement the knowledge and practices they learned in their community or church.

Of course, the possibility comes with challenges. Overall, the concept of inclusivity in theory in our respective communities is already strong, but the practice still takes time. This is our biggest challenge. Our work or ourselves are sometimes at stake when we stand by LGBTIQ+ friends. Churches also sometimes don't send their assignments to lecture or to be organization member on our progressive campuses or organization because of their traditional perspective. There (churches) are also many views that LGBT people are sinners and need counseling to return to the way of God. These challenges will remain but the possibilities for fighting for justice for genders and discriminated sexuality are always present as I said before.

Our big dreams for the church and the world are (1) Church and World without Violence Against both women and LGBTIQ, and (2) hopefully in the future there will be many ordained ministers regardless of gender and sexuality.

**Second Topic: Institutional and personal journeys – developing a personal/institutional code of conduct in terms of institutional and educational policies and practices: how would you state it, and what does such a code suggest about areas of implementation.**

## GROUP 1

A vision to form a fully inclusive theological community includes a multi-pronged focus on:

· **Providing an Inclusive Theological Education that is committed to:**

1. Diverse and inclusive student body, especially Women (50%), LGBTQI, marginalized
2. Curriculum and Resources for teaching and research in gender and sexuality

3. Spiritual formation and worship that cultivates inclusion, and faces the real challenges ahead with sustaining hope.
  4. Training students to navigate their way post graduation, and communicate effectively with church laity
  5. Inclusive faculty
    - § At least 50% women
- **Creating and implementing policies that address sexual harassment and violence, and establishes a community covenant/ code of conduct**
  - **Cultivating Stakeholders that can be partners**
    1. Some need church's participation/ what do they expect from the seminaries so they can make good use of students when they graduate? Seminaries need the churches' support.
    2. \How to negotiate with churches? or find allies? Keep them focused on mission of the school?
  - **Solidarity and grass roots work with people's movements.**
  - **Identifies and finds support from allies: internal and external**

### **GROUP 3-**

- Most of the churches do not have gender justice policy and code of conduct
- Most of the theological colleges do not have gender justice policy and code of conduct
- It is essential that church and the theological colleges draft a gender justice policy and implement it.

### **GROUP 4**

- Swarup: every college has its vision and mission and the word "inclusivity" should be part of the working statement. Probably out of that mission, policy will be formulated. Requirements must be put into the institution's objective. (2) The DEIA club with the

assistance of the US embassy built in Calcutta to develop of atmosphere to accept different people. (3) who will teach the pastor? The seminary?

- Chun: solidarity should become an important agenda. Society and the academic community should work together on this agenda so they can understand each other.
- Justitia: we have developed a code of conduct to prevent sexual misconduct/violence started in theology schools. With the Association of Indonesia Women Theologians (PERUATI) we trained theology school representatives to draft the regulation and also establish a campus task force to implement the regulation. This is also in line with Indonesia's Ministry of Education regulation to prevent sexual violence in high schools/universities.
- Wati: Our theology reflections must be the guide of our inclusive teaching. In this light, the code of conduct should be implemented so that society and the church can celebrate diversity.
- Ejodia: PERUATI, together with civil society organization in Indonesia tried for years to push our law makers to approved the Elimination of Sexual Violence Bill (Indonesian: Rancangan Undang-Undang Penghapusan Kekerasan Seksual, abbreviated as RUU PKS) the bill name was renamed as Bill on Sexual Violence Crimes finally approved in 2022. For us, it was a victory.

In Indonesia, we have a domestic violence prevention law to eliminate domestic violence (UU KDRT 23, 2004). We (PERUATI) together with KOMNAS PEREMPUAN (The National Commission of Women's Rights) try to promote this at the church level to integrate it into premarital counseling so the couple has to sign it before getting married to protect one party become a victim of violence.

- Every college has its vision and mission and the word "inclusivity" should be part of the working statement. Probably out of that mission, policy will be formulated. Requirements must be put into the institution's objective.
- Solidarity should become an important agenda. Society and the academic community should work together on this agenda so they can understand each other.
- Insitutions have developed a code of conduct to prevent sexual misconduct/violence started in theology schools. With the Association of Indonesia Women Theologians (PERUATI) we trained theology school representatives to draft the regulation and also establish a campus task force to implement the regulation. This is also in line with Indonesia's Ministry of Education regulation to prevent sexual violence in high schools/universities.
- Some insitutions have adopted sexual harassment policies, but many do not have the policy. The LGBTIQ+ concerns and problems they faced is not cover in the sexual harassment policies.
- Sexuality is the greatest gift of God, and sexual diversities reflect the image of God. The incarnation of God took place among the margins, and God continues to reveal among the margins even today. In the core teaching of the Jesus is justice, love and care of all. This should become the guiding principle of

any policies. The code of conduct should be inclusive and implemented so that society and the church can celebrate the diversity.

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- In Indonesia, we have a domestic violence prevention law to eliminate domestic violence (UU KDRT 23, 2004). We (PERUATI) together with KOMNAS PEREMPUAN (The National Commission of Women's Rights) try to promote this at the church level to integrate it into premarital counseling so the couple has to sign it before getting married to protect one party become a victim of violence.
- We recognize that public awareness and Institutions taking a stand on justice to the victims be carry on always.

## Thursday 04 July

### Recap of Day 2 – Karl James E. Villamea

If Dorcas use the metaphor of a family and their trips and adventures, let me use the image of a house and household to describe what we did yesterday. We as a household are settling in a new space, familiarizing the new situation we find ourselves in—yesterday, was opening windows of our house. We saw the context/environment that surrounds us, the trees, the shrubs, the flowers that surround.

0830 - Morning Prayer: Amazing Grace on piano

Announcement and welcome of two more participants who arrived last night

At the sound of the gong at 831, our morning reflection started. Dr. Lidya offered a reflection on

“Steadfastness and unity” — theme from a short reflection on Philipians (Paul); recognition of women in Paul's ministry (female ministry). And how their story inspire us to imagine potential to work for solidarity.

Together with short prayers and hymn that inspires and attunes, our morning prayer ended our reflection at 904AM.

Then we welcomed and introduced those who came in late the other night.



After which at around, 9:18AM, we opened our morning session, with Dorcas Gordon presiding and leading us to a brief introductory note and historical background on the whys and hows FTEAP and we ended up here.

- Sad reality — exclude some group: ethnicity, race, and gender. Sinfulness and impurity. Some seen as less righteous and less pure. Women relegated to secondary status.
- Realization that theological school plays a critical role in building an inclusive society, this is more so for FTEAP. Thus the need to transform/change curricula and conduct pedagogical training, among others, to respond to the situation.
- On this note that FTEAP has launched its “Religion, Gender, and Sexuality” program. Started in 2012, FTEAP was involved in the promotion of women’s leadership; faculty development; librarianship. In 2022, adopted as well mission statement on Contextual education—and the need for constant dialogue with lived realities of people especially those in the margins. To initiate partnership of theological institutions
- Of particular note, in 2016, FTEAP made “gender and sexuality” not simply as a religious issue, but as justice issue
- Pointing out the the way ahead, Dorcas emphasizes that this gather is the first interregional partnership, a fruition of the work that has been done in the past decade. Which she also invited for all of us to be involved.
- She ended not only with a word of invitation but also of challenge, to think seriously and wresting with—and personally something to also highlight in this recap—the *habitus* of inclusivity. How do we indeed nurture a structuring structure, the *habitus*, that allows inclusion and mutual growth?

We ended this session at 939AM, and after a fruitful interregnum, we started our regional group report, based on the consultations and meetings before this gathering.

## India

- To report and reflection of the consultation they had last year
- Theme: Theological Education in Human Sexuality (August 18, 2023)
- Rationale: human sexuality affects all and it is human rights and justice issue
- Gender as women’s issue
- Heterosexual culture. Very negative toward human sexuality.
- Feminist theology is taught.
- Re-orientation of theological education and faculty training
- Transforming moment when members of the community were part/included in the consultation
- Suggestions: visibility in the faith community and theological institutions. Admission without church recommendation.
- Teacher’s Training for Inclusive Community

- Clarifications: on the redesigning and revision of the BD degree, through intersectionality and integration. Problem in India: church and theological institutions should work together because churches control theological content
- Long term — because within theological institutions change can happen.
- Short term — not only pastors but also layleaders

At 1027AM, Dorcas declared with great conviction, that we need to have teatime.

#### Myanmar

- Context: many religious faith (spirit worship), ethnic groups, hetero-patriarchal: still dominant. Heterosexual as the norm. Homophobia is spreading.
- What Have We Done: Gender Awareness through Feminist Theology
- Four main institutions: Association Theological Education in Myanmar, MIT, women's desk MCC, NGOs. Revised theological texts
- Gender equality is still a work that we are still doing.
- Annually graduating hundreds of students but do not help transform the patriarchal ethos of the church and the nation
- Next year — political situation: challenging but fruitful
- Domestic violence in the community

#### Thailand

- Talking about these issues for many years but nothing happened because Thailand is still very much a patriarchal society

#### Nepal

- Women empowerment: many denominations
- Majority: Hindus
- To build an inclusive society is to empower women; leadership role. Leadership skills.
- Faculty development.
- Theological seminary: marginalized people — let their voice be heard
- 50% of the faculty are women
- There seems to have gains in terms of women empowerment—how is the seminary working in changing the patriarchy in the church and even in the seminary (Myanmar)
- Tried to influence the church through our students

#### Indonesia

- Theological research
- Patriarchal as cultural violence
- Aim of Indonesian Collaborative Program: enhance theological education in Indonesia

12NN (AWRC)-because of tech issues.

- Publication of *In God's Image* (1992)
- Claiming space, rereading history/making herstory
- Creative approach
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## Philippines

- Context in the Philippines: Christian primarily (80% Roman Catholic; 7%)
- Union Theological Seminary: the church is one of the most dangerous places for women and children, and LGBTQIA++ persons
- Babaylan — cultural and spiritual ancestors.
- Feminist Theologies —
- OSAEC (Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children) — Philippines is the epicenter
- Shared the works with UTS
- Collaboration with Lizette and Kakay
- Public space to engage
- Policy, structures, procedures

Because we are not only beautiful but also dedicated people, we ended our morning session we past lunch time. For sure, it was a very substantive discussion and reflection. And we were rewarded with a sumptuous lunch.

In the afternoon, we were divided into 5 groups with 5 members, coming from different regions to discuss and reflect together the possibilities and challenges we, on a personal and institutional level, see and experience on the area of gender and sexuality.

- There are few things to highlight in this discussion
  1. Significant development in the area, for example, presence of women faculty—while they may be excluded from ordination in some regions, it is well noted that women play a vital role in our theological institutions
  2. While this can be said to women, this cannot be said to LGBTQIA+/sexual minorities; they remain to be in the margins as our churches cannot yet imagine the beloved community
  3. On this note that heterosexuality is identified as the “ontological condition” we find ourselves in today. There might be gender studies center and program in most of our institutions that pay attention to the issue of empowerment and equality and even institutional transformation. But most of us have not yet address gender and sex issue from the point of view of human rights and justice. Thus substantially limit our abilities to respond to the issues of the marginalized sexual minorities in our communities. It is on this note however that many of us have identified as an area of possibilities—for development and engagement

The second half of this group discussion has to do with our personal and institutional journeys in terms of educational policies and practices:

- Let me just recap the many points by saying that I have heard different ways of framing spaces and practices aka policies that animate a culture that enables gender-sex justice

Like we how we opened our day with a beautiful reflection from Lidya, we ended our day together with a beautiful story from Dorcas. A story of her family, on their many adventure camping trips, that perhaps like them, in this journey/work together, we will have many glorious sunsets and energizing sunrises, and also, many rains and mosquitoes... and like her story, may our story be also told in many years to come.

## **Topics: (1) Personal and Institutional journeys towards an Inclusive Biblical Hermeneutics**

## **(2) Personal and Institutional journeys towards an inclusive interpretation of cultural beliefs and practices**

### **GROUP 1**

OPENING STATEMENT : Biblical interpretation is a tool that can contribute to justice or injustice

DISCUSSION:

1. A literal interpretation of scripture is a way that reading that more often than not results in exclusion and contributes to gender based violence often because it builds on the prejudices of the reader (someone has said that the "bible doesn't mean anything until someone reads it")
2. An inclusionary hermeneutics needs to be developed; a contextual/participatory reading lends itself toward inclusion as long as no one is absent from participating.
3. Feminist hermeneutics worked for many years to develop other ways of reading the bible focused on inclusion of women and then recognized that such interpretations needed to be broader focused on inclusion of all especially those who are doubly or triply marginalized
4. What does it mean to read from different perspectives? For example, it calls us to recognize how culture determines interpretation and how it can be inclusionary or exclusionary e.g., caste system in India; on the other hand, tribal

interpreters are working to bring positive elements of tribal culture into interpretation, e.g., linking tribal stories to biblical stories

5. It is also important to recognize that all translations are interpretations and need to be approached critically

6. Discussion also spoke of the role scripture has in enforcing gender roles – women should be submissive; it defines what it means to be a good girl or good boy in ways that have already put us in a box in terms of gender roles; examples, women are more like children than adults resulting in them being behind in terms of sharing leadership, in knowing how to exercise leadership

7. Seminaries need to commit ethically to a form of biblical interpretation that promotes inclusion; other hermeneutical models can be studied but only those that aim at inclusion should be promoted

#### **GROUP 4**

- Focus on less harmful readings of the text. Sharing stories of exclusion and forms of religious violence against those who are othered. One participant was grandchild of first generation Muslim convert, in very conservative evangelical context – Christian Missionary Alliance. Teaches NT and feels burden to open the text up. Saves Christians from themselves. Left church and then later found Union Seminary.

- Another participant grew up in a welcoming and progressive church, in pluralistic, predominantly Muslim context. Several first cousins are Muslim. Interfaith encounter is important part of the context. Their school has 500 students. 20 years of exchange with State Muslim University. Gender hermeneutic: engage a hermeneutic of suspicion. Women's leadership in church is still an issue.

- Myanmar: inclusive hermeneutic is a daily struggle. Bible is used to justify conservatism and discrimination. Fundamentalist reading. Patriarchy is ordained. Encourage students to read Bible from women's perspective and gender equality perspective. Teach how to read in relation to ancient cultural and historical context of Bible. Examine translation closely. Meaning making is key. Inclusive hermeneutic is vital. Going to publish a book on Gender and the Bible. Politics in Myanmar also driven by gender issues.

- Contrast between the Ecumenical NCCI and Theological Schools vs. Nagaland Baptist Church (American Baptist). Ministers fall back into traditional praxis in the church. Learning and praxis are divided. Church needs to identify LGBTI community as a welcoming ministerial/mission field so learning and praxis can come together.

- Another participant's parents were Christian converts from Islam. Muslim family is moderate. Grew up believing only one way (Christianity). As a seminary student, they learned the historical critical method as a way of finding THE meaning. This was also a

problem. Encounters and exchanges really opened him up. The Bible speaks to many people with different backgrounds.

- The importance of encounter and experience.

## **GROUP: How to do Biblical Hermeneutics Toward Inclusion**

Group members: Justitia, Gambhir, Agustina, Cho, Amadeo, Lizette

1. Necessity of reframing the focus of interpretation towards life - Primacy of reality and centrality of the victim
2. Reading the Bible from the perspective of children
3. Celebrating multiple voices - especially the marginalized
4. The need for re-interpreting the power of God, not as control but liberation
5. How to promote the 'critical' perspective/consciousness, as opposed to "honoring" or "revering" the text
6. We need to understand the human condition, psychology in relation with how we construct and relate to the Divine.
7. The multiplicity of experiences of God by communities and individuals
8. Need to read from "Other's" perspective
9. Intersectionality and positionality discourses
10. Need for interfaith and ecumenical cooperation on the issues of women, children (Nepal experience where religious come together- child marriages, etc.).
11. (Augustina) Reading from own embodied experiences, as a person with disability - to be honest about and to yourself (Job's wife - she suffered as much as Job, even more) - people need this!
13. The need for cooperation among the institutions in one country for fora, publication

### Cultural

14. Understanding our people's history, doing confession as Christians, and drawing and writing our own histories are the beginnings of inclusive interpretations (Babaylan)
15. More examples: (North Sumatra) Natinjo - Batak tradition - non-binary figure who defends a territory, Toba Lake - called Ibu, or mother
16. Dua jambar - two gifts - two sexes - but now Batak theologians are trying to recollect and reconstruct

### Challenges

1. Reading the Bible literally, no interpretation (Jephthah's daughter)
2. The pastors do not want new ways of reading - because the authority is being questioned - the Bible and the pastor

3. In Indonesian context - parents 'sacrifice' their children for the oaths/promises they make to God; parents are god-like - filial piety; enslavement in the family, in the church because of Biblical interpretation
4. The Bible is "proof."
5. The invisibility and the silencing of LGBTQI persons in the Church (Indonesia, Nepal, South Korea)
6. Gender and sexuality issues are taboo
7. LGBTQI persons are perceived as sexual offenders; heterosexual men can get away with sexual violence
- 8.
9. Cultural
10. (Nepal) Caste system - the people from outside of the church suspect that there is dishonoring of the caste; the churches have to be careful
11. (Korea) Society is more open and accepting; church is more closed; Confucian belief that our bodies is from the ancestors - is used against sexual minorities
12. Korean War - obligation to go to military service - toxic masculinity

## **ANOTHER GROUP:**

### **India**

- To report and reflection of the consultation they had last year
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- Four main institutions: Association Theological Education in Myanmar, MIT, women's desk MCC, NGOs. Revised theological texts
- Gender equality is still a work that we are still doing.
- Annually graduating hundreds of students but do not help transform the patriarchal ethos of the church and the nation
- Next year — political situation: challenging but fruitful
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## **Thailand**

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- Women empowerment: many denominations
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- To build an inclusive society is to empower women; leadership role. Leadership skills.
- Faculty development.
- Theological seminary: marginalized people — let their voice be heard
- 50% of the faculty are women
- There seems to have gains in terms of women empowerment—how is the seminary working in changing the patriarchy in the church and even in the seminary (Myanmar)
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- There are few things to highlight in this discussion
  1. Significant development in the area, for example, presence of women faculty—while they may be excluded from ordination in some regions, it is well noted that women play a vital role in our theological institutions
  2. While this can be said to women, this cannot be said to LGBTQIA+/sexual minorities; they remain to be in the margins as our churches cannot yet imagine the beloved community
  3. On this note that heterosexuality is identified as the “ontological condition” we find ourselves in today. There might be gender studies center and program in most of our institutions that pay attention to the issue of empowerment and equality and even institutional transformation. But most of us have not yet address gender and sex issue from the point of view of human rights and justice. Thus substantially limit our abilities to respond to the issues of the marginalized sexual minorities in our communities. It is on this note however that many of us have identified as an area of possibilities—for development and engagement

The second half of this group discussion has to do with our personal and institutional journeys in terms of educational policies and practices:

- Let me just recap the many points by saying that I have heard different ways of framing spaces and practices aka policies that animate a culture that enables gender-sex justice

### **FULL GROUP DISCUSSION: Institutional and educational policies and practices that might form students for an inclusive ministerial practice.**

**Repeated Theme: need biblical hermeneutics that reframe interpretation towards life. Should focus on the primacy and centrality of the victim/marginalized and primacy of reality/urgency. We urgently need to respond to the realities facing us.**

Recommended Courses: Inclusive Community, Contextual Biblical Interpretation, Placements.

**Repeated Theme: Huge gap between what students are learning in seminaries and their work in churches.**

- Question: do seminaries offer any programs for laity?
- Several noted the importance of sending students to community field placements instead of/or before church placements. Praxis oriented theological education is of critical importance.
- Serampore has laity course of study.
- Bishops College is offering courses for laity. Have not yet integrated issues if gender/sexuality.
- Bishops College also offers refresher courses for pastors. But pastors are needing a different kind of format to help them address their practical needs.
- Need to train students *how to actualize in the church* what they are learning in theological school.
- How to address survival for young pastors in traditional churches? Need course in overseeing institutional change?

**Repeated Theme: The importance of encounter**

- **People are interested not in ideas but in living encounters with people.**
- **People need to encounter/experience people/communities rather than ideas about them.**

**Visit to Glitz. Hearing stories and perspectives from Anggun Pradesa (identifies as transgender, artist, activist, poet, filmmaker), Lini Zurlia (Queer feminist activist and advocate), Jonat Saragih (Program Manager at Outright).**

**Takeaways:** theological schools and churches need to show up and stand with LGBTQI community, show same courage as the LGBTQI community, even if in small, strategic steps. Stand against bullying and conversion therapy. Acknowledge the human dignity of LGBTQI persons. Religion is important dimension of LGBTQI advocacy and community; must not be left behind. Encounter is key – know the community: “If you don’t know us, you can’t love us.”

## **Friday 05 July**

### **Recap of Day 4: Chul Chon**

Yesterday morning, under the guidance of rev. Hsiu Yin Chan, we participate a prayer and short meditation session. We reflected on whom to invite into the empty chairs and empty hearts. We contemplated who our theological educational institutions should journey with and who today our neighbor, the neighbor of theology is.

We then had a group discussion on "Personal and Institutional Journeys towards an Inclusive Biblical Hermeneutics" and the "Inclusive Interpretation of Cultural Beliefs and Practices." Although I could not participate in other group discussions, in our group, we confirmed that relevant biblical hermeneutics are highly needed to open the door for theological reinterpretation concerning LGBTQ+ issues today. Furthermore, we acknowledged that a deepened approach to gender issues requires significant cultural and historical exploration and reflection.

After the coffee break, we held an open forum on "Institutional and Educational Policies and Practices That Might Form Students for an Inclusive Ministerial Practice." During this forum, discussions and various issues from each group were shared. Some of the highlights from the discussions are as follows:

First, it was highlighted that it is necessary to read the Bible from the perspective of victims and shed light on today's reality from the perspective of victims.

Second, we agreed that the tasks facing theological education today must be carried out under the motto of "unity in diversity." Particularly, how to bridge the significant gap between theological education, academic discussions, and the perspectives of the church and laypeople was identified as a critical issue.

Third, we shared that the issues of religion, gender, and sexuality are complex problems in the context of uniquely diverse religious society and reality in Asia. In this context, we confirmed that a deepened approach to historical criticism, interfaith dialogue, and the

collaboration between theory and practice are important tasks. This also involves the integration of education and culture.

Fourth, practical program examples to bridge the gap between theological education and the church were shared, including how educational institutions extend important resources into field education programs and efforts by various centers and institutions to form and expand community organizers.

Fifth, long-term approaches and plans for laypeople courses and training were shared. Methods for re-educating pastors and providing exposure to the community to deepen their understanding of gender and sexuality issues were also discussed.

Sixth, we highlighted the significant task of how to apply various agendas of theological education institutions to churches and the field, and how to reflect on church common sense and reality theologically. There was also critical discussion on the bottom-up methodology, reflecting on the difficulties of integrating various feminist theological discussions and explorations with the reality and the ecclesia, the community of love.

Seventh, we shared ways and examples of how to theologically understand and support LGBTIQ+ individuals. We also shared various forums and practical efforts to overcome trauma, in collaboration with each church, denomination, and various human rights centers.

After lunch, open the new chapters we visited the LGBTIQ+ community in Jakarta. There, we had the opportunity to hear directly from LGBTIQ+ friends. What particularly impressed us was understanding the arduous identities and challenging lives of LGBTIQ+ individuals, and how our society, laws, and common misconceptions continuously define, oppress, and marginalize them. We observed how the church often neglects and oppresses LGBTIQ+ individuals and discussed the social and institutional inadequacies and future challenges regarding this issue.

Aktivist Lini Zurlias sentence, "If you don't know, you don't love," made us realize the many reasons we have been unable to love them. It was a meaningful time for us to reflect on how we, both personally and institutionally, as well as the church as a precious community of God's creation, should move forward in their direction.

I want to share with you the last sentence of Victor Hugo's novel, *Les Misérables*: To love another person is to see the faith of god. Thank you.

**Limatula reminds us:** Feminist movement in Asia dates back to the 70s, has been a WOMEN'S MOVEMENT and is still struggling to achieve justice. As we strive for gender and sexuality justice, we need to expand beyond women's work. Need to look into the lived experience of LGBTQI persons so we can open our horizons, learn together, and be transformed together.

**Personal stories of exclusion and marginalization as experienced by transgendered, intersex/bisexual, lesbian and gay persons** (two persons – Kakay and Ramin Satyahadi)

Kakay:

Scene from Mulan: "When will my reflection show who I am inside?" And reading from the Ballad of Mulan.

Raised evangelical and attended Jesuit high school. Best friends were Muslim, "yoked with unbelievers." At 17, realized she was lesbian. Felt doomed. Went to college at Silliman and was psychology major, learned she was not deviant and was a fully normal human being. Church narrative said the opposite, kept her shrouded in shame. Left church, tired of the narrative that she was going to hell. Moved to Manila as a young professional. Found an ecumenical church that she loved and hated at the same time. Got a MCC scholarship to Union Theological Seminary. Came out on first day at seminary. Answered questions and found it exhausting but kept going.

Inclusion is more than a matter of policies and curriculum. Requires so much more and asks a lot. Changes everything. Institutions need to be clear and ready. Need to know their values and commitments. Union expected her to work hard on her theological articulation. She worked harder than ever because Union showed they were committed to her, ready to wrestle with core matters, to go from acceptance to commitment and struggle. This has allowed her to live into her ministry fearlessly. This also allowed Union to hold her accountable, in return.

Ramin Satyahadi:

Mental health counselor and trauma healing, artist and activist. Transgender, transitioning from man to woman.

Memories of gender identity awareness/dressing as a girl since age 3. Grew up feeling shame and sinful. Forced self to act macho, but could not completely hide true gender identity from self. Since age 5, house was venue for filmmaking. She would go to wardrobe space and try on clothing: shared story on YouTube interview. In family, emotions were repressed and suppressed. Moved to Singapore at age 11, developed bipolar disorder, manic for years. Went to RISDI in US and then Paris, and then went into depression. Went back to US and bipolar intensified. That she was able to function, she credits to God. Went through time of being angry at God, but could not completely let go. Got married in Indonesia. Had a mental break. Asked God to "destroy" her and rebuild her and help her find her purpose. Was cured of bipolar since 2018, off meds. Eventually got an NLP certificate to practice trauma healing,

Has an intimate relationship with God now. Feels God has been restoring her and building her identity in God, and not in anything else. Feels God has guided her through

her transitioning, Local news is doing a major story on her story and spirituality; was also subject of a PhD dissertation on Holy Spirit as Queer.

Discussion:

- We see the violence inflicted by heteronormativity.
- Important for us to understand transgender and cisgender.
- How was Union seminary “ready”? The people were ready vis a vis core values they came to articulate when Kakay was there. Willing to speak and to self-correct. They “rose to meet” Kakay.

**Sharing of personal experiences of interaction with the LGBTQI+ community – c/i Indonesia participants**, followed by an open forum

Agustinus:

Shared about past homophobia.

In 2002, learned that his Dutch pastor friend was gay after having spent time with him at his home in the Netherlands. Challenged his homophobic assumptions held since childhood and shaped by the church and society. He eventually repented; church and society still needs to.

In 2011, began studying complexity of human sexuality and gender. Also began studying biblical texts, how they are interpreted, and how they are used. His principle of reading and living: building a common life based on Micah 6:8. Shared new perspective with spouse and together they are raising children based on these guidelines.

**Additional take aways:**

- Encounter is key.
- Helps us to learn about complexity of sexuality and gender

**Some more stories:** At Union in NYC, Lydia developed friendships with gay and lesbian students who were most empathetic with her. This week we are learning the importance of creating honest and safe spaces (in universities, etc.) and the need for church to repent.

In 2021, a friend came out and was told his sexuality was a sin. She understood because she experienced being told that her disability was due to sin. Wrote to the church to raise her concern.

When she was a child, her parent was Bible study teacher with a tribe, whose leader was first woman tribal leader and was also gay. To hide her identity, she forced her partner to marry a younger relative. Reflecting now on her many years of struggle.

Friend took his life 25 years ago at age 25. Felt pressure to “heal” himself for church and family.

Some churches require pastors to be married. Told story of arranged marriage that immediately failed and led to pastor losing his church.

Pedophilia is very different from sexual orientation.

Had long felt homophobia/transphobia due to a negative experience as a young person. More recently had experience with gay student who had HIV/AIDS. Fought for him to be able to continue. Now has gay and lesbian friends.

MIT has a program in gender studies and invited members of the queer community to assist them. Sees how invisible they are in the church, which keeps people in church from seeing them – a self-perpetuating problem.

In Philippines: no legal protections or civil rights for LGBTI couples and families

## **Small Group Discussions: Implications of such personal stories for building inclusivity in institutional policy, practices, and curricula**

### **GROUP 1:**

- Gender inclusive documentation.
- Residential planning – gather community and discuss – learn how to handle discomfort - how to handle toilets?
- Zero tolerance policies. Will vary from country to country based on laws in place.
- Need to modify liturgy: use theological education as labs; a Sunday for the LGBTQIA community.
- Connect to allies, like NCC in India.
- Trainings and lectures.
- Required courses.
- LGBT: Let Grace Be Total.

## **GROUP 2: Karl, Marthin, Limatula, Lydia, and Aye**

1. Create a system of clear reporting and investigation processes for addressing sexual harassment and discrimination.
2. Co-educational-existence space for all genders.
3. Offer LGBTIQ+ sensitivity and allyship training for all staff, students, and faculty.
4. Ensure all forms, paperwork, and intake processes use inclusive gender options beyond just 'male' and 'female.'
5. Create support system/groups
6. Incorporate LGBTIQ+ histories, stories, experiences, literature, and perspective in our courses, since it is a matter of theological issues. This also means creating workshops and seminars focusses on sexuality issues.
7. Invite LGBTIQ+ guest speakers, authors, and role models to campus. – It is us who need to convert and ask for forgiveness.
8. Preferential options for the LGBTIQ+ people, such as:
  - Inviting them to have a meal together.
  - Display affirming signage and imagery around the institution.
  - Providing scholarship for those who want to do research and writing on the issues of LGBT people and publish it in a journal.

## **GROUP 3:**

- 2 key points: don't rush to labeling a person. Who will be included?

## **GROUP 4:**

Myanmar: open to LGBTQI community at grassroots level.. Many of the Buddhists priests are gay. No laws restricting or protecting LGBTQI. In the church: not a topic of public discussion; don't ask, don't tell. LGBTQI serving in church leadership; not explicitly out, but known informally to be gay and expected to be celibate. The Methodist church will begin performing same sex marriages. MIT has curriculum in gender studies. Kachin Baptists more conservative.

North Sulawesi Province: tribal practices are similar to Myanmar.

Issue emerging in our discussion: full inclusion embraces LGBTQI persons who can be open and public in every dimension of their lives; don't ask, don't tell is not inclusive.



CCI issued a pastoral letter in 2015/2016. Did not lead to any change in policies or practices.

One participant shared about their inclusive church and how the congregation moved to full inclusion.

An obstacle: fundamentalist Baptist and other churches. Need an intercultural approach.

How to begin conversation when people do not even recognize the presence of gay or lesbian people in the church? Suggestion: open conversation about people they care about who have been rejected or can find no home in the church. People who hold two things at once: their faith tradition and their experience of their loved ones and feel the tension. The Bible give us example after example of how to put these things in conversation. Paul could not resolve the scandal of a risen and crucified Christ who appeared to him – had both the experience of his encounter with Christ and the tradition that considered a crucified Christ scandalous. He reread and reinterpreted his tradition in light of his encounter/experience of Christ.

## **GROUP 5**

- Education is key.
- Need to see LGBTQI persons with a positive image before teaching them.
- Invite LGBTQI representatives to the school to hear from them and get to know them. Need to create space for encounter.
- Inclusive language is also key.

**06 July 2024**

## **Recap of Day 5: Swarup Bar**

Yesterday was a day of great learning and profound experience and emotions which were overwhelming and somehow difficult to put in words. Yet I have tried to put them down, although I am not sure whether I have done justice to the entire day's profound deliberations.

The opening devotion for the day set the tone for the entire day as it focused on the love of God which leads us to leave our comfort zones and take risks for people in need. The Bible reading, songs and prayers reflected the theme. Dr. Oan led the worship while Mr. Ghambir Rai led the short devotion, which encouraged us to look unto God once again for courage to love.

The moderator for the day Dr. Limatula invited Dr. Chun Chul to give a recap of Day 3 and the report presented was greatly appreciated.

Thereafter, before launching the next session Dr. Limatula highlighted the importance of involving both men, women and other sexual orientations to the fight for open-mindedness in this issue. She issued a call towards confessing our sins of the negative approach towards the LGBTQI community and of opening our hearts, widening the circle to inclusion.

Next, we had the session of sharing of personal experiences from two speakers from the LGBTQI community, the first one was Kakay Pamaran from Philippines and second was Ramin Sjailendra Satyahadi from Indonesia.

Through the wonderful introduction of a song video of the ballad of Mulan of a girl, a brave warrior, Kakay unveiled the struggle that Mulan went through in understanding her own gender and relationships. Thereafter, Kakay narrated her personal story of how she realized her sexual orientation gradually and found herself unacceptable in the Church, although as per Clinical Psychology, homosexuality can be normative. She chose to live fully with her sexual orientation and found her vocation when she was accepted into Union Theological Seminary for her theological training. She became more committed towards issues of gender and human sexuality while in the Seminary and discovered how God can use people of various sexual orientation to serve God's purposes. Now she is the coordinator of Gender Justice Study Centre, Union Theological Seminary, in the Philippines continuing her work of advocacy regarding this issue.

Advocating for these issues is not an easy thing- work of full inclusion requires all of us- Union was very clear about ethical and pedagogical programs- welcomed by Union-ready to receive people of different sexual orientations.

Next speaker- Ramin Sjailendra Satyahadi from Indonesia, who is a full-time professional counsellor and activist shared how he/she has been struggling since when he/she was 3 years old, regarding his sexuality. He/she shared the responses of his mother and father towards the sexual orientation he had. Ramin felt female traits from his childhood. However, from childhood he/she had tried to conform to the norms of the society, where honest feelings about his sexual orientation were largely ignored. Later years Ramin found himself/herself to have bi-polar disorder but he fared well in life, in academics, sports and in all curriculums. Through great upheavals in life, even many suicidal attempts, Ramin found that God is his most true companion. It was God who

helped to destroy and build his/her life towards the better. Ramin now continues to be a professional counsellor and help people of various sexual orientations to cope with their struggles.

After these two sharings, a Q&A session followed:

Questions were asked regarding parental abuse and how to reconcile these into the whole understanding of the life of an LGBTQ person. Questions regarding whether the inclusion of an LGBTQ person in a seminary impacts the seminary or the students were asked.

The summary of the responses was that for an LGBTQ person, the love of and for parents, even the abusive ones are not easy to process very clearly. The attachment still remains, although love and abuse should be clearly defined. In this case the issue of upbringing is a great factor in the mental health of an LGBTQ person. Regarding whether the presence of LGBTQ person makes any difference to the Seminary or the students, one thing is sure that it shows the openness of the Seminary towards these issues and the attitude of acceptance towards these communities.

After the tea-break, there were sharing in an open forum by various participants:

Dr. Augustinus shared how he discovered that how heterosexual approaches are social constructs and how both homosexual and heterosexual people cannot be identified unless a person comes out declaring the sexual orientation. He highlighted the importance of opening our hearts, minds, our Biblical interpretation and theology towards justice, faithfulness and humbleness towards God and towards these people.

Dr. Lydia- shared how there were was the need for the church to open up while there were challenges in terms of the family and the congregation towards these issues. She affirmed that the Church needs to repent and create an atmosphere of inclusivity.

Dr. Augustine Raplina her experiences how she and the theological college stood by a friend who came out as gay in the Church, while he was not accepted by the Church and how the friend was supported.

Toshirenla Ao Lama- shared how the first woman leader of the tribe was an ordained woman and was a lesbian and although she lived with her partner, she was unable to declare her sexual orientation till the old age. She shared how societal norms prevent people from living fully and declaring their sexual orientation.

Dr. Oan- shared the story of her friend who took his life because of the non-acceptance of his orientation by the church and society and expressed the need for listening and being there for these people.

Dr. Wati- shared the story of a pastor, with a different sexual orientation, who became jobless because he was forced to marry before his ordination against his wishes, and now he is a divorcee and is not accepted by the congregation any more.

Dr. Aswathy- shared the story of a pastor who became increasingly attracted to boys in spite of being married and the issue of abuse and how this could be interpreted. Kakay responded by saying that sexual abuse has nothing to do with sexual orientation- paedophilia a psychological disorder is a criminal offence and gender sensitivity should take into the question of ethics.

Dr. Zaw- shared through his experiences of gay people that we need to have a posture of understanding of these people and that being human is more important than societal norms.

Dr. Aye- expressed that queer people are really marginalized and invisible and they are not able to express their identity. They need the courage to express themselves. The community is really afraid of homosexuality and marriage.

Kakay- expressed that LGBTQ people hope for legal protection and rights to be ensured in the coming days.

Lunch break and shopping followed

After return, there were group discussions with 5 groups and the report-back or feedback session were conducted.

Various groups presented their ideas about institutional curriculum and policies: The highlights of the presentations were the following:

- Masters and Doctoral researchers should take this topic into consideration.
- Invite LGBTQ people to the Seminary for live discussions.
- Creating the safe and healthy space for them in the Seminary.
- Inclusive language should be used in studies and liturgy.
- Create a system for reporting abuse of LGBTQ people.
- Zero tolerance policies regarding sexual harassment
- Training for students and faculty regarding this issue.

- All institutional admission forms should include LGBTQ category.
- Stories & experiences of LGBTQ people should be included in the courses.
- Institutionally asking for forgiveness for the attitudes towards these people.
- Providing scholarship for research into LGBTQ studies.
- Residential dormitories in the colleges geared towards facilitating LGBTQ people staying with others.
- Proper labelling of toilets to ensure inclusivity.
- UN rules and laws can be consulted regarding formulating policies.
- Modifying liturgy and language to be more inclusive in the college and Church
- Bible translations should be sensitive towards this community.
- Special Sundays in Churches can be organized for LGBTQI community.
- Working with allies for eg. NCCI in India and others to strengthen advocacy.
- Pedagogy for teachers to be developed keeping in mind this community.
- Required courses to be in place in the seminary to change mindsets of people.
- Need for developing an atmosphere of diversity in campuses and churches.

The slogan “Let grace be total” (LGBT) should guide our approaches.

### **NATIONAL GROUP and REGIONAL MEETINGS: Looking ahead to 2025**

For these discussions: remember the theme of this workshop, consider what it means to be an inclusive community – what stage are we at and what are our theological or philosophical foundations? What are your program suggestions of 2025? How can FTEAP accompany your plans/events/ actions?

## NATIONAL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

### Myanmar and Thailand – Zaw Latt Aung (group leader)

· A communal table that welcomes everyone no matter who they are regardless of their age, race, gender, sexual orientation, class, and worldviews because we are all created in God's image, and although we are different, we belong to one body, the body of Christ.

#### Myanmar:

o Association for Theological Education in Myanmar (ATEM) will arrange the following programs for 2025:

§ a seminar for academicians and church leaders, gather to raise awareness and educate them about gender equality,

§ a seminar for academicians, seminary teachers on reading bible with different eyes,

§ yearly joint training programs for students, school by school under ATEM, to raise awareness and educate them about gender and sexuality,

§ a seminar on doing handbook for gender studies to be used by 36 member schools, and

§ collaborate with the church body and theological institutions in Thailand to organize a joint workshop on gender and sexuality, possibly in Mae Sot, Thailand.\*

o MIT gender studies center will arrange the following programs:

§ A seminar for students and faculty to have an opportunity to meet with queer persons and have conversation with them, to get to know one another, and to hear their stories

§ A workshop on theological understanding of the differences in sexuality

#### Thailand:

o I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to FTEAP for your support in various ways to help the Theological Institutions and the Church Body in Thailand to be aware of our accountability to nurture and promote inclusive community and to really put it into actions.

o This year 2024, FTEAP granted us a fund to organize a joint workshop between 3 parties: the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT), which is an

ecumenical body of the church and the two main seminaries under the umbrella of the CCT, one is Bangkok institute of Theology, and the other one is McGilvary College of Divinity. This workshop is on “Gender Equality and Ethnic Minority Empowerment.” This workshop will be held between July 26-28 in the place called Chonburi, located near BKK. The topic of sexuality and LGBTIQ+ might not get to be addressed directly in this workshop,. But the taskforce committee will get a chance to discuss our plan for 2025-2026. We will make sure to include this topic in the next workshop.

o Possible programs or events for 2025

§ A joint training workshop for CCT leaders, BIT, and MCD representatives on gender and sexuality. The training will include the sharing of LGBTIQ+ persons whose lives have been affected by the church, regions, and/or theological institution. We will provide a safe space for them to 1) share their stories, struggles, journey through challenges and difficulties and 2) suggest some possible ways of actions that the church/faith community or theological institution can do better in response to their needs/ struggles/ pains.

To raise awareness of gender and sexuality, teachers in theological institutions, pastors, church leaders need to be educated about LGBTIQ+ and hear the voices and testimony of LGBTIQ+ persons.

\*A joint workshop with ATEM either in 2025 or 2026

- Support from FTEAP:  
Send international speakers/ resource persons for the seminars and give full support to us in organizing the programs and activities.
- Continue to support gender and sexuality programs and activities for at least another 5 years.
- Provide scholarship for conducting empirical research on gender and sexuality.
- Provide supports for publication and handbook on gender and sexuality.

## **Philippines – Lizette Tapia Raquel (group leader)**

Inclusive: assumes deep solidarity with grass roots movements; companionship and collaboration with local movements and organizations; do work that animates and embodies shared humanity and commitments.

Two strands:

- research (gender ideologies; learn from latest scientific scholarship; new ways to read texts in distinctively asian modality)
- teaching materials (equip learners, critique church, reimagine theological concepts; construct liberative textual hermeneutics; imagine a world with gender justice, and more)
- Will organize facilitators training in May 2024
- FTEAP: support \$ and identify human resources

## **India – Nelvala Gnana Prasuna (group leader)**

Inclusion is a holistic approach towards people. That includes Theological, physical, psychological, spiritual, emotional and philosophical.

Acts 2 of Pentecostal experience is an excellent model of inclusive community

Biblical models of Adam as the creation of God, not as a man but an inclusive community

We can find number of similar models

Recommendations:

- add another column as other in the application forms

Preparing Theological Colleges and churches to inclusive sensitive.

Student Christian movement of India can be encouraged to organise seminars

- Rainbow day can be observed monthly

- students can be encouraged to form clubs Inclusive clubs

Diversity Equity inclusivity acceptance



- Encourage colleges to organise seminars with community members, church leaders, pastors and laypeople
- Encourage colleges to have more exposure programs
- Encourage LGBTQ+ members to join Theological Education

- Senate would continue to train the trainers, include the faculties of the South East Asian neighbouring countries
- develop resources related to human sexuality

### 3. FTEAP

-Financial Support and accompaniment for the programs and publications

- scholarships to the members if they come for Theological Education to the colleges or The Senate of Serampore

## **Nepal – Toshirenia (group leader)**

Inclusive: “far behind” (still working on inclusion of women’s leadership) and the many ethnic groups/cultures that shape their context already makes church unity difficult. Need to prepare.

Need workshops with key leaders; need expertise  
Need to educate faculty and examine curriculum.

## **Korea and Taiwan (Chun Chul)**

Need in depth discussion and share resources.

Women’s theological network and close communication

Need to study cultural and theological factors re. exclusion :  
consultation on why women's inclusion is still difficult.

Need to do interdisciplinary research.

Form mutual network between Hanshin University and AWTN/  
South Korea and Taiwan

FTEAP: need support

## **PERSETIA (Justitia)**

Definition of inclusion will shift according to context; in partnerships will conduct research and publication in March 2025; scholarships for Masters students; training program for laity July 2025; resource person; library resource; translation book project;

## **REGIONAL GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

### **South Asia (India & Nepal) -Aswathy John (group leader)**

India has already produced textbooks and resources.  
Hosting 3 teachers consultations in 2025 – Nepal & Serampore to collaborate/participate.  
Nepalese educational structures are varied and deep financial challenges – beginning to address gender justice; addressing LGBTQI will take some time.  
FTEAP: support \$ and books; \$ for participants who may not be able to obtain funding; FTEAP presence

### **Southeast Asia (Myanmar, Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, etc) – Aye Aye Maw (group leader).**

1. Inclusive community is embracing the vulnerable (children, women, elderly, LGBTQI, environment) - two sides: those who accept the LGBT and those who did not
2. Persetia and Perwati are planning to a. Conduct research, workshop, publication = February 2025b. Scholarship for reserach work on gender and sexualityc. Training program for lay persons for gender, sexuality, and religion
3. Funding, Providing resource person, translation of book projects, library and resource development.

### **Philippines**

1. What does it mean to be an inclusive community?

Crying-Out, Resisting, Asserting, Celebrating as a Community.

This is who we are and what we do.

Partnering with movements and standing in solidarity with LGBTQI++ movements and communities

2. What are your program suggestions?

A. Research and Basic Teaching Materials for the Southeast Asian Context

What are the anti-gender ideologies?

What can we learn from science about gender and sexuality?

What are new and alternative ways of reading/interpreting texts to equip lay persons and clergy?

Objectives Per Module (7 parts)

1. To equip the learners with a basic understanding of SOGIE
2. To analyze and critique how religion and churches denigrate body and sexuality
3. To reimagine and reconstruct theological and biblical concepts for gender justice
4. To understand trauma and violence, and pleasure and wholeness
5. To engage affirming and inclusive texts for liberating interpretations
6. To understand human relationships, personal, and communal ethics
7. To imagine a world where there is gender justice

How can FTEAP accompany you?

1. Fund the module writing and publication/translation/distribution (Beginning December 2024)
2. Fund a trainors' training (May 2025)

**Northeast Asia (S Korea & Taiwan) – Chun Chul**

Will share learnings from this week with seminaries in Taiwan so as to begin to network and collaborate.

## CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Karl (Convenor), Swarup Bar, Chananporn Jaiasodee, Zaw Latt Aung, Pdt. Sientje Latupatty and one person from LGBTQI+ community –

- Need for sustainability in order for institutional commitment to continue.
- Need to maintain this network and help one another.
- Need to articulate theological language re. Gender and Sexuality as Asian theologians. This is about the Gospel and role as centers of formation.
- Rise of authoritarianism around the world is accompanied by anti-queer forces

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## WORKSHOP EVALUATION: ANSWERS FROM PARTICIPANTS

### 1. What in this workshop was of greatest value to you?

- I have had opportunities to meet with different scholars who are committed to gender equality and justice. Meeting each other empowers our journey together to build an inclusive community.
- I am very impressed by the life stories of queer people who are struggling to express their real identity. Their lives will be a good model for next generation of queer community to empower them to overcome obstacles and to create their dreams.
- Knowing each other strengthens our networking to support each other in journeying together to overcome the obstacles and achieve our goals.
- Time to discuss and sharing with each other is valuable for our theological journey in seeking new wisdom.

- Aye New

Deeply touched by LGBTQ's lives. I see the hope for a better future of LGBTQ people because we are journeying together- encouraged, enriched and strengthened.

- Hsiu Yin Chan

What was valuable was the engagement with LGBT persons and the small group discussions where people can converse deeply on the questions given.

- Lizette Tapia Raquel

Compassion and empathy; challenging preconceptions; humanizing persons' experiences.

- Eric von Martin

The realities of LGBTQI+ were made clearer, and they call for relevant theological education with an intentional approach to this minority in the church and society. They are a socio-cultural issue that has recently been recognized in our educational system by theological educators.

- Mar Atsongchanger

Listening to stories of LGBTQI+ persons directly was heart-touching and moving, and it changed my total view of them. I realize that our churches and society are so violent against them and that we need to stand in solidarity with them and work for an inclusive church and society.

- Amenla Jamir

The greatest value to me from this workshop is - Without knowing the nature (Biological, Psychological, Mental, Emotional, background etc.) of LGBTQI, we can not go further for gender and sexual equality in order to reach to the grassroots level.

- Zaw Latt Aung(Myanmar)

Having the opportunity to visit LGBTQI+ community and listening to the life stories of various persons from the community was the greatest value to me. I was reminded that I must pay more attention and listen attentively to the unheard voices. I have strongly felt God charging me with the responsibility to advocate for marginalized people, especially those who face difficulties and discrimination because of their gender and sexual orientation.

- Oan Jaisaodee

I always thought that LGBTQI+ people are group of trouble makers in society. After encountering them and listening to many voices in the workshop, my perspective has changed. I am motivated to do my PhD thesis on LGBTQI+ issue.

- Toshirenla Lama

## 2. What do you want to have included in the 2025 national/regional consultations?

- 2025 workshop should include Biblical and Theological perspectives on queer because all the participants are not specializing on gender and queer. Biblical and theological foundations are needed to widen the knowledge and understanding of individuals and communities concerning queer people and their identities.
- Psychological healing for queer is needed to know how to deal with the queer people positively.
- The strengths of queer people should be studied to understand their great contributions to the community.
- National workshops or seminars on sexualities should be promoted to raise and strengthen the awareness of the community.

- Aye New

Perhaps we can develop modules for gender and sexuality education, trainers' training on the same modules. Also, there is a need to do workshops on contextual biblical interpretation, particularly on gender, inclusion, sexuality, and related issues.

- Lizette Tapia Raquel

The inclusion of more church workers and LGBTQI+ activists throughout the consultation will be more enriching

- Mar Atsongchanger

Inclusion of contemporary trends on Biblical, Theological and Ethical issues involved in LGBTQI+ can be included to equip the participants on the subject. The publication of the Resource Book is appreciated, and more such publications should continue.

- Amenla Jamir

What I want to have included in the next year program is to call a professional psychiatrist and let him/her share/teach the natures of LGBTQI/ people and also to know some facts to do and not to do while we are dealing with them.

- Zaw Latt Aung(Myanmar)