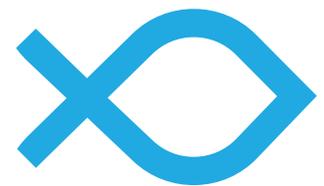




The role of churches in the context of **violence** on marginalised groups such as LGBTI peoples

**Proceedings from the meeting of Heads of churches,  
project coordinators and General Secretaries  
in FOCCISA, held in Johannesburg  
from 29th August to 1st September 2016**



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## **1. Introduction to the Supplement**

This *Supplement* was commissioned by the Heads of Churches, Project Coordinators and General Secretaries of FOCCISA at the conclusion of their meeting held in Johannesburg from 29 August – 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016. The theme of the meeting was “The role of the Churches in the context of violence on marginalized groups such as LGBTI people.” LGBTI is an acronym used to describe the diversity of sexual and gender minorities and stands for: L-lesbians; G-gays; B-bisexual; T-transgender; and I-Intersex. All these terms are explained in the Glossary found at the end of the Supplement on page 29.

Five (5) papers were presented at this conference. These papers/articles are discussed in this *Supplement*. At the end of the conference participants met in country groups to decide on the way forward. They committed themselves to action plans to address the plight of LGBTI in their countries. Some of the comments from these groups were: “Need training of trainers. Need to know more about LGBTI” and “God loves unconditionally. This is where to start. We are all created in the image of God. It is important to see that things are not of choice or preference. Orientation is not a choice.”

The *Supplement* is a response to the need for training. It is also a continuation of the *One Body Series* and discusses the same topics such as *Human Dignity*, *Gender-Based Violence* and *Unity of Humanity as One Body* and the *Method of Dialogue*. In addition, the topic of “*Marginalization*” will be discussed as a context for understanding the marginalization of LGBTI.

The next section will discuss the background to this meeting and the theme of marginalized groups with a particular focus on LGBTI.

## **2. Background to the FOCCISA Conference**

The decision to have a meeting of Heads of churches, project coordinators and General Secretaries of FOCCISA, to discuss the topic “The role of the Churches in the context of marginalized groups such as LGBTI people” was taken at the Gender and HIV/AIDS coordinators meeting organized by Nordic - FOCCISA cooperation on Gender and HIV/AIDS.

This meeting took place in Johannesburg – South Africa from 11<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> February 2016. The aim of this meeting was to discuss in a closed forum the issue of Gender-Based Violence and violence against marginalized groups of people in church and society.

## Summary of meeting

Three papers were presented at the meeting in February 2016, and these were:

- a. *African rights, Human rights and the Golden rule* by Rev. Knut Refsdal (Christian Council of Norway General Secretary)
- b. *The historical development in the understanding of human sexuality, especially related to sexual minorities in Africa and the present situation* by Lebohang Matela
- c. *How should the churches relate to the present situation for sexual minorities?* by Bishop Malusi Mpumulwana (South African Council of Churches General Secretary).

Group discussions included stories on stigma and discrimination taken from the material developed by the Nordic-FOCCISA cooperation on HIV and AIDS that is the *One Body Series*. People from the LGBTI community in the Southern African region were invited to the meeting to share their stories.

At the end of the meeting, participants expressed a strong commitment to continue the work on human rights and theology in their countries. They were also exposed to the challenges faced by LGBTI people and committed themselves to speaking out against discrimination and violence against LGBTI in their respective countries.

### **Comments of the participants after the meeting.**

The participants felt that there was a need for dialogue about LGBTI to a larger representation of each National Christian Council particularly the Presidents and executive committee members of the Christian Councils. It was difficult for national programs in some of the National Christian Councils to take off without the support and blessing from the Presidents and members of the executive who are also the policymakers.

### **Recommendations for the way forward**

The participants decided on the following:

- convening a meeting similar to the one that they had
- at that meeting, the main speaker would be Bishop Malusi Mpumulwana of the South African Council of Churches
- the participants should be the representatives of the National Christian Councils consisting of the President, General Secretary, a woman representative and a youth representative.

### **Methodology to be used in the conference**

Although facilitation of the meeting will be done by different facilitators in accordance with the subjects which will be covered, the dialogue method will be used during the meeting.

## **Resources to be used**

Christian Councils/Council of Churches in Southern Africa in cooperation with the Christian Council of Norway and some of the other Nordic Christian Councils developed a tool through *One Body Series* with the themes such as human dignity, gender, youth, abuse and the method of dialogue.

The next section will discuss the method of dialogue.

### **3. The Dialogue Method**

#### **What is a dialogue?**

Dialogue is something more than a conversation or a discussion. It is a chance to explore shared beliefs as well as differences of opinion and understanding. It is a method, a tool of reflection, allowing us to shed light on sensitive issues. But it is also a goal in itself, reinforcing the dignity and equality of the persons participating and the relations between us (*One Body Human Dignity in every human being. Facilitators' guide:6*).

There is a difference between dialogue, conversation, and discussion. The difference is that dialogue takes place only when the dignity of all participants is respected so that all can share freely their thoughts, feelings, and reflection without fear. Dialogue makes it possible for new insights to emerge through the exchange of views and this happens when all views and differences of opinion are respected and encouraged. No one should be afraid to express their opinion or ask questions, there is room for everyone.

#### **What are the characteristics of a dialogue?**

The characteristics of dialogue are as follows:

- Dialogue is not about convincing anyone of your viewpoint, but about helping each other to move to new levels of understanding
- Dialogue should take place with due respect for differing viewpoints and contain a willingness to learn from each other.
- Dialogue requires a safe place in which no one is to be harassed or silenced because of their opinions (*One Body Human Dignity in every human being. Facilitators' guide: 6*).

#### **What are the rules of dialogue?**

- Respect your own human dignity and that of other participants by speaking with respect and sensitivity and listening with respect to others even if you do not agree with them. Speak with dignity and listen with dignity.
- Make sure that everyone has a chance to speak and share their views.
- Create a safe place so that everyone can speak freely without fear or intimidation.
- Avoid raising your voice, making threats and being disrespectful.
- Be open-minded and ready to learn

- Remember we are all learners so do not be shy about sharing your thoughts and opinions – your voice is important to the dialogue.

**The dialogue will be applied in all discussions throughout this *Supplement*.**

### **Questions for dialogue**

- Define dialogue and give examples from your experiences.
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the method of dialogue?
- How can the dialogue method be used in discussions on LGBTI issues?

The next section will discuss marginalization as background for understanding the marginalization of LGBTI.

## **4. Marginalization**

### **What is marginalization?**

According to the Cambridge Dictionary ‘to marginalize’ is ‘to treat someone or something as if they are not important’ (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/marginalize>).

The Dictionary of Sociology defines marginalization as follows,

Marginalization has been defined as a complex process of relegating specific groups of people to the lower or outer edge of society. It effectively pushes these groups of people to the margin of society economically, politically, culturally and socially following the policy of exclusion. It denies a section of the society equal access to productive resources and avenues for the realization of their productive human potential and opportunities for their full capacity utilization (<http://www.sociologyguide.com/civil-society/marginalization.php>).

### **What are the characteristics of marginalization?**

Based on the above definition, marginalization has the following characteristics:

- It is a human activity that is done by human beings on other human beings
- Judges some groups in society as inferior to others
- Is often a result of stigmatization and exclusion of others
- Denies these groups political, economic, cultural and human rights
- Is an act of violence expressed in multiple ways including physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual
- Violates the human dignity and rights of all marginalized groups.

## Who experiences marginalization?

Everyone experiences marginalization! There is marginalization based on every aspect of our human characteristics. People are marginalized because of their race, ethnicity, weight, height, appearance, educational status, disability, economic status, gender, health status, barrenness, marital status, religion etc.

When we are marginalized we often tend to marginalize ourselves and believe that we are inferior to others. Similarly, when we are stigmatized we tend to stigmatize ourselves.

Marginalization breeds all kinds of violence including verbal, physical, exclusion and rejection.

## Jesus and Marginalization

Marginalization was present at the time of Jesus and in his community. The groups that were marginalized included tax collectors, Samaritans, lepers and sex workers. Jesus befriended these groups and extended his ministry to them. Some examples include the following:

- Healing of the leper (Mark 1:40-45)
- Visiting Zacchaeus a tax collector in his home (Luke 19:1-10)
- Allowing a woman described as a 'sinner' to touch and anoint him (Luke 7:36-50)
- Eating and dining with these groups (Matt 11:16-19)
- Talking to a Samaritan woman (John 4:1-26)

Jesus throughout his ministry was in solidarity with marginalized groups setting an example for the church in every age to follow his example.

## Questions for dialogue

- a. Define marginalization in your own words and provide examples of marginalized groups in your community.
- b. Describe the relationship between marginalization and violence.
- c. How can churches follow the example of Jesus in their ministry to marginalized groups?

The next section will discuss three themes from the *One Body Series*. These are **Human Dignity, Gender-Based Violence (GBV), and Humanity as one Body**.

## **5. One Body Series: Human dignity, Gender-based violence, and Humanity as one Body.**

### **5.1. Human dignity:**

#### **What is Human Dignity?**

Human dignity can be defined as follows:

Human dignity is the God-given intrinsic value of being human-irrespective of class, race, gender, ability, nationality, culture, sex, religion, education, sexual orientation or any other division” (One Body *Human Dignity inherent in every human being:8*)

**Every person, therefore, has dignity and there are no exceptions.** No one can take away the dignity of another person even if they choose not to recognize it. For example, racism can never take away the dignity of black people. This is what we mean by ‘intrinsic value’ that is all human beings have dignity and rights which can never be taken away from them.

Human dignity is also based on the fact that all persons without exception are made in the image of God (*imago Dei*),

For faith institutions, the concept of human dignity is anchored in the belief that every human being – woman, man, girl, and boy is created in the image of God, and has been given a unique position in God's world with the same responsibilities and tasks. (One Body *Human Dignity inherent in every human being:8*)

#### **What can we learn about human dignity from Jesus?**

Jesus treated all persons equally: women, men and the marginalized. Therefore we are “considered close friends, equal as sisters and brothers of Christ. There is no room for stigma, discrimination or condemnation of any human being: “We are one Body, united in the spirit of love and compassion” (One Body *Human Dignity inherent in every human being: 9*).

#### **What is the relationship between human dignity and violence?**

Another way of understanding human dignity is through the violence committed against marginalized groups in our communities including persons with albinism, disabilities and LGBTI people. Their experiences of abuse, violence, stigma, and exclusion are a violation of their human dignity. Therefore violence is against human dignity. We need to ask ourselves this question "How can people struggle against any form of abuse and misuse of each other? How can they move beyond the divisions in their society, whether due to race, class, gender, sexual orientation, age or other factors" (One Body *Human Dignity inherent in every human being: 9*).

## Questions for dialogue

- a. Define human dignity in your own words and give examples.
- b. Describe what it means to say that ‘human beings are created in the image of God.’
- c. How can churches apply Jesus’ equal treatment of people in their response to marginalized groups in their communities particularly LGBTI?
- d. Describe the relationship between violence, and violation of human dignity? Give examples.

### 5.2. Gender-based violence (GBV)

#### **What is gender-based violence?**

Gender-Based Violence consists of actions *that inflict physical, mental, psychological, economic or sexual harm including threats of such acts* on a person solely because of their gender.

#### **What is gender?**

Gender can be defined as follows,

The word *gender* is used to describe the characteristics, roles, and responsibilities of women and men, boys and girls in different cultures and at different times. The concept of gender is related to how we are perceived and expected to think and act as women and men – not because of our biological differences, but because of the way our societies and cultures are organized and developed. Gender perceptions change over time and in different cultures (*One Body Human Dignity inherent in every human being: 12*).

For example, some men beat their wives because they believe that their culture gives them the right to do so as they have power over their wives and children as heads of their families.

#### **What is the difference between gender and sex?**

Sex relates to biological characteristics and physiological differences between women and men. For example, women can bear children and breastfeed, men cannot do that, but have an equal part with women in procreation. These biological characteristics do not change with time and place (*One Body Human Dignity inherent in every human being:12*).

Sex refers to the bodily differences between women and men: women give birth and men do not; men impregnate and women do not. Gender is the social construction of sex that is the cultural and social roles that define what it means to be a woman or man in a given culture and society and at a particular time in history. For example, in some cultures, women are expected to do the housework (e.g. cooking and cleaning) while men are expected to work and provide for their families. In other words, our sex is biological and determined at birth but our culture and society prescribe different roles, norms, behaviour, and power according to our sex.

## **Which groups are most vulnerable to gender-based violence?**

Gender-based violence (GBV) happens in every culture and society and affects mostly women and currently LGBTI. The World Health Organization describes violence against women as a global epidemic that affects over a third of women in the world. It is a major threat to women's physical, social and psychological wellbeing and constitutes a violation of their dignity and rights, the most basic of which is the right to a life free from all forms of violence. Marginalized groups like LGBTI, persons with albinism and disabilities also face violence and violation of their rights and human dignity.

Although most perpetrators of violence are men, not all men are perpetrators of violence. Many men have not committed any acts of violence or raped women or violated LGBTI. Similarly, not all women have been subjected to violence. Some women are perpetrators of violence. LGBTI people also face gender-based violence because they do not conform to the gender roles and norms prescribed by their cultures. For example 'corrective rape' against LGBTI is widespread and the perpetrators believe that they are 'correcting' their sexuality through rape so that they can be 'real African women' or 'real African men.'

## **Gender-based violence and human rights**

Gender-based violence violates the human dignity and rights of victims and survivors. Every person has a right to life without violence. Cultural norms and practices that discriminate against gender non-conforming people and view women and femininity as inferior to men and masculinity need to be challenged as these are some of the root causes of violence. Similarly, churches should not remain silent while the human dignity of persons made in the image of God is violated through all forms of violence.

## **Questions for dialogue**

- a. Define gender-based violence and give examples.
- b. Describe the differences between gender and sex.
- c. In your cultures what are the roles, beliefs, and practices that differentiate women from men and how are people who do not conform to these cultural expectations treated?
- d. What is the status of LGBTI people in your culture and community?

### 5.3. Humanity as One Body

All human beings are created in the image of God and have equal dignity: “We are One Body, united in the spirit of love and compassion” (*One Body Human Dignity inherent in every human being*:9).

St Paul's image of the Church as ‘the body’ was thought to be a particularly powerful one. ‘The human race is, in truth, one person, one universal body it is important we get to know,’ said one participant. ‘When we destroy another person, we destroy something within ourselves and, as a consequence, in all of humanity. What you do to others, you do to yourself and to all of us. But this does not mean that we humans are alike. There is great variety among us, in the same way, that there is variety in each and every one of us.’ Exclusion and denial occurs when this diversity is unacknowledged (*One Body Vol. 1 North-South Reflections in the face of HIV and AIDS*: 43)

We are connected and interdependent as human beings which reflects the African concept of *Ubuntu*: “I am because we are” and “a person is a person because of others.” Therefore when one person is violated, all of humanity suffers. We cannot be unconcerned about the suffering of other human beings who share the same dignity as us and who are a part of us. Further, there is no division in the body all are one! We will further discuss *Ubuntu* later on in another session.

#### **Questions for dialogue**

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|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. What is the implication of believing that all of humanity is ‘One Body’?</li><li>b. “Exclusion and denial occur when this diversity is unacknowledged “Why is the acknowledgement and appreciation of diversity important?</li><li>c. Do you think that there is a relationship between denial of diversity and violence?<br/>Give examples to support your answer.</li></ol> |
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The five articles from the conference will be presented for dialogue.

## **6. Article 1: How should Churches relate to the present situation for marginalized groups such as LGBTI people?**

**Bishop Malusi Mpumlwana**

**Quotation from Article 1:** Why do we expect that the churches will now, suddenly make the case of the LGBTI a matter of just action when in fact there is hardly any just action for any social, economic or political manifestations of darkness or rot in our region?

### **Selected texts from the article for dialogue:**

#### **The Church called to be salt and light of the world**

I shall make this my starting point. "You are the salt of the earth! ... You are the light of the world!" This is the charge, the mandate that Jesus gives to his disciples; to you and me; and to the congregations, we are called to accompany in the pilgrimage of faith. This is a descriptive that defines our identity. In other words, Jesus' message that we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world suggests that we cannot and should not seek to claim the title of a disciple to the Lord, without practicing as salt and light. In the same way that light spreads out to expel darkness where it exists, that salt eats away at rot to preserve the corruptible sheepskin into a treated item that can serve as a decent bedside mat.

We have said that the church is called to be salt of the earth and light of the world. In addition, to be sure that no one thinks this requirement is just for the church leaders who stand in the shoes of the Apostles, Jesus in Matthew 25:31-46 paints the picture of judgment day, the burden of our discipleship:

I was marginalized and weak, and hooray! You stood up for me!

I was bullied and violently persecuted, and alas, you looked the other way!

Like the priest and the Levite in the Good Samaritan parable, you were too busy and preoccupied with the business of going to church!

As you and I seek to justify ourselves with "When did we look the other way?" The Lord says as long as you looked the other way when my children were vilified for being different from the majority, as long as you left the killing of people with albinism, and the social and physical violence against the LGBTI community, you abandoned me and looked the other way at my crucifixion!

#### **Methodology: See Judge Act**

Now for the content issues: We recommend the SEE-JUDGE –ACT model. What is that? The SEE is research, to seek to know enough about all there is to know in order to plan your action intelligently. Focusing on the LGBTI situation:

What social and public policy environment do we have? What are the myths that society holds and where do these come from? What happens to people who are known to be in the LGBTI community? In what circumstances are people molested, and in what circumstances are they safe? Here may be many questions to answer for a very good picture of the situation for a situational analysis.

Then, knowing what we now know, we do the JUDGE that is, applying our theological lenses to say, what does the love of Christ require of us in regard to what we know to be the case? What does the message of Paul to Timothy mean to us when he says?

“Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”

There are many different interpretations of sacred texts. This why it is necessary to invest in pastors so that the JUDGE can be informed by sound theology. Even if a person thought it is sinful to be an LGBTI person as many do argue, there is yet the message of Jesus in John 8: 7-11, for the person to throw the first stone if they are without sin in their own life”.

### Questions for Dialogue

- a. Discuss the quotation at the beginning of the article – does it reflect the status of the church in contemporary society? Give examples to support your answer.
- b. Describe ‘See, Judge and Act’ methodology.
- c. How can this methodology assist churches in their response to violence against LGBTI?

### Bible Study: The Ministry of Jesus to the Marginalized

Text: Luke 4: 18-20 – the ministry of Jesus

He unrolled the scroll and found the place where this was written:

<sup>18</sup> “The Spirit of the LORD is upon me,  
for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released,  
that the blind will see,  
that the oppressed will be set free,  
<sup>19</sup> and that the time of the LORD’s favor has come.”<sup>19</sup>

<sup>20</sup> He rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the attendant, and sat down. All eyes in the synagogue looked at him intently. <sup>21</sup> Then he began to speak to them. “The Scripture you’ve just heard has been fulfilled this very day!”

#### Discussion Questions

Describe the target groups in the ministry of Jesus and give examples of similar groups from your community. How can churches follow the example of Jesus in relation to marginalized groups?

## **7. Article 2: Ubuntu, sacred texts and the agency of people on the margins:**

**Dr. Masiwa Ragies Gunda**

**Quotation from Article 2:**“Ubuntu is a Pan African concept which suggests that one’s humanity is incomplete without acknowledging the humanity of the other/next person (Chitando 2016)”.

**Selected texts from the article for dialogue: There are two sections.**

### **Section 1: Ubuntu, the Bible as Sacred Text and the Bible and LGBTI**

#### ***Ubuntu***

The term *Ubuntu* comes from Bantu languages and is used to describe what it means to be a person. *Ubuntu* is described as a philosophy that places the importance of group or communal existence or identity as opposed to the western emphasis on individualism and individual human rights. From the perspective of *Ubuntu*, everything is done in the interests of the community ahead of the interests of the individual (Mangena). In short, Ubuntu is understood as a philosophy that places the primacy of the community over the individual, and to further elaborate on this, some phrases and idioms have been used such as:

- ❖ in the Nguni/Ndebele phrase, "*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*" (a person is a person through other persons)
- ❖ in the Xhosa proverb, "*ungamntu ngabanye abantu*", (a person is made a person by other persons)
- ❖ in the Shona phrase, "*munhu unoitwa munhu nevamwe vanhu*" (a person is made a person by other persons)

#### **The Bible as a sacred text**

The Bible is held in high esteem by all Christians who believe that it is the holy, sacred Word of God. However, on many issues, Christians are divided and have different contradictory beliefs. For example, there are differences among Christians on issues such as the status of women and polygamy. Some Christians accept polygamy while others reject it and believe in monogamy. In some churches, women cannot receive Holy Communion unless their heads are covered while in other churches women receive Holy Communion without covering their heads. These are some of the examples of the many issues that we differ as Christians even though we all reference from the same Bible. This makes the Bible a site of struggle. Some Christians search for verses in the Bible that become weapons to fight and marginalize target groups of people while other Christians wrestle with the Bible in search of God’s liberating message in relation to all people irrespective of their status. Based on these different uses of the Bible by Christians, one can conclude that the many forms of marginalization practiced by Christians are actually based on a particular reading of the Bible! This can also be seen in the twodifferent lines of arguments on the status of LGBTI that have emerged among Christians:

- ❖ The first line of argument is that sexual minorities are not a normal part of the created world, that God intended for heterosexuality hence God created Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve. Through the use of the so-called "bullet texts" (Genesis 19; Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; 1 Timothy 1:9-10 and Jude 1:7). It has been suggested based on Genesis 19 that homosexuality was so wicked that God punished the people of Sodom so severely and that if any society were to accept sexual minorities it would put them on the path to destruction. In some cases, physical violence against LGBTI has been supported by Christians based on these texts.
- ❖ The second line of argument is that sexual minorities are a wonderful part of God's creation and that God created males and females and others who are neither male nor female. This diversity is not an abomination but a divinely ordained difference. Through the use of some texts such as Matthew 19:12 ("eunuchs who were born that way") and 1 Corinthians 12-13 (diversity and difference) it has been argued that diversity is part of God's creation yet all are united in their diversity and difference as one body created in the image of God. The hermeneutic of love and abundant life have been central to this reading of the Bible that seeks to "enlarge the tent of the House of God" (Isa.54:2) to accommodate all those that have been excluded and marginalized.

Now that we are aware that there are these two divergent positions, all based on an interpretation of some texts in the Bible, we can now appreciate that this is the 'struggle' for which our communities are invited to engage in. We are called to "wrestle with the Bible" as Jacob wrestled with the angel in Genesis 32:22-31. We must struggle and wrestle with the Bible and with the help from God and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit particularly in relation to issues where we differ as Christians as in the case of LGBTI.

However, we need to be aware that the largest threat to this struggle is the politicisation of the LGBTI people in our communities. Christians are called to follow the mission by Christ and must engage with LGBTI persons through the example of Jesus' own dealings with those that were on the margins, the outcasts of his time.

### Questions for dialogue

- a. Describe *Ubuntu* and explain how it differs from western individualism.
- b. Analyse the two lines of argument in relation to LGBTI: what is the central argument in each interpretation how would each respond to violence against LGBTI.
- c. How can the method of dialogue help Christians to "wrestle with the Bible" when there are different interpretations?

## **Section 2: Ubuntu and Sacred Texts: Resources for Re-appraising People on the Margins**

In this section, I intend to highlight some aspects of Ubuntu and the Bible that actually challenge us to re-think our perception toward LGBTI persons in our community. While there has been an emphasis in the community on Ubuntu, I critically think that the individual is not completely excluded. Similarly, at the heart of the revolutionary Christian faith and attested both in the Old and New Testaments is the charge to protect the vulnerable (Ex.12:49, 22:21-22; Lk.4:18-22). The following are points that are critical in our quest to re-engage with both Ubuntu and the Bible:

- ❖ Ubuntu is the idea that no one can be healthy when the community is sick. Ubuntu says I am human only because you are human. If I undermine your humanity, I dehumanise myself (Yamamoto 1997:52).
- ❖ Ubuntu is the interdependence of persons for the exercise, development, and fulfilment of their potential to be both individuals and community (Battle (2009:2).

From these two key meanings of Ubuntu, one could argue that it is in its openness to protect all persons within the community that it could become "the gift to the world" because our world is driven by philosophies that are built on discrimination of marginalized groups. All members of the community, notwithstanding their diversity, are fully accommodated in the community. Their role and status in the community are not dependent on them converting to be like the majority. Diversity has always been a part and parcel of all communities. However, I am not suggesting that there are no expectations or obligations for those that are members of the community because they are there. There are expectations and obligations not to harm other members of the community and to assist in every way possible members of the community. These expectations do not seek to eradicate the diversities that exist among community members.

Coming to the Bible and following on earlier observations that the Bible must be taken as a "site of struggle", it is important to consider how we approach the Bible, especially being aware that some of our readings may cause death and harm while others may give life, comfort, and security to some people. I consider the following points to be critical for our engagement with the Bible:

- ❖ That in the Old Testament, God's Israelite project is to create a society that is governed by the principles of justice, righteousness, equality and equity. In this society, all would be welcome and would be catered for (the image of Eden, the Abrahamic nation (Gen.18), the Promise to the Exodus party, the Occupation and Settlement in the Promised Land and the reigns of Judges are all interwoven into this project of God). The prophetic theology (Isa.1:17, Jer.7:5-7, Amos 5:24, Micah 6:8) of the Old Testament is also falling into this consistent strand of thought that God is making Israel a pilot project for a just human society. All that God asks is for us to be agents of justice and righteousness towards the vulnerable and marginalized in our communities.
- ❖ The great inaugural statement by Jesus in Luke 4:18-20 follows this consistent strand of thought, proclaiming the "good news", which would offer hope, comfort, and

security to those who were at the mercy of the Roman Empire. Are we surprised, then, that from its inception Christianity started off by being a refuge to those that were outcasts of their time? Christianity was a movement where the marginalized were brought inside and acknowledged as full members without exception!

### Questions for Dialogue

- a. Reflect on this statement: "it is important to consider how we approach the Bible, especially being aware that some of our readings may cause violence, death, and harm while others may give life, comfort, and security to some people". Can you think of examples of readings of the bible that have caused violence and harm to LGBTI and also readings that can be a source of life for LGBTI?
- b. How can churches apply *Ubuntu* and the Bible to advocate for the human dignity of marginalized groups including LGBTI in your community?

## 8. Contextual Bible Study: Understanding the Sin of Sodom

**A. The story of Sodom has been widely used by Christians to justify why the Christian churches cannot acknowledge the full humanity of LGBTI persons. We are invited to engage with the Bible once again to try and understand what we can learn from the narratives and whether that can help us in our quest to hear God speaking to us regarding LGBTI persons in our community and church context.**

To begin our Bible Study, let us begin by thinking about strangers and visitors to our homes and churches. We all have received strangers and visitors, now let us answer the following questions on strangers and visitors.

1. What do we do when strangers or visitors come to our homes or churches?
2. What proverbs or idioms do we have in our language that tells us what to do to strangers and visitors?

**B. Read Genesis 18 and 19 as a group and answer the following questions**

1. Identify the characters in these chapters
2. What good did Abraham do in this narrative towards strangers?
3. What was the difference between Lot and the men of Sodom regarding the strangers?
4. How are the sins of Sodom described in these chapters?

**C. Examples of references to Sodom in other parts of the Bible**

Reference	What are the sins mentioned that are related to Sodom?
Ezekiel 16:49-50	
Jeremiah 23:14	
Matthew 10:14-15	
Jude 1:7	

#### D. Dialogue Question

Based on the readings of the Genesis story of the Sodom together with other references to it from different books in the Bible, how does a fuller understanding of the events contribute to the dialogue between churches and LGBTI persons?

### **8. Article 3: Until the lions can tell their own stories, the story of the hunt will always glorify the hunters: Addressing GBV and transforming discrimination with compassion by encountering the “othered” - Contextual reading of Matthew 15:21-28.**

**Fulata Lusungu Moyo**

**Quotation from Article 3:** “Biblical texts were always used to justify my Christian community’s discrimination against me as a sinner. I painfully learnt that sexual ‘sins’ were considered heavier sins than others, especially if the consequences are visible through pregnancy.”

#### **Selected texts from the article for dialogue:**

##### Moyo’s Experiences

I came back to the University of Malawi as a fourth-year student even though I knew I was pregnant. The university rules clearly suspended pregnant women until after their babies were two years old. How could I tell my Christian family that I was pregnant? I was a Christian leader at university and I was not married. The father of my unborn baby was also a respected Christian leader. I feared to face my judgmental Christian community that seemed to value the outward observance of accepted norms more than living the gospel of compassion. I even considered my own death or abortion as easier options than facing discrimination and condemnation from those whose love and acceptance I desperately needed as my community.

When [my boyfriend Solomon and I] gathered courage and told our Christian community, one of the standard reaction was: "You are bringing shame to the body of Christ! Why didn't you prevent pregnancy or even abort so as not to pour humiliation to the Christian community?" Sometimes, it did not matter that God in Christ accepts us just as we are. The

discrimination from our brothers and sisters that took different expressions was so unbearable that at one point

Solomon wondered whether being Christian was worth it. It was easier to struggle in prayer alone consumed in self-pity and feeling of unworthiness than to pretend to 'fellowship' alone amongst people who treated you as if you were "othered" as if you were a sin itself. If it were not for the few Christian brothers and sisters and some members of our two families that courageously took extra steps to embrace us, our faith would have been put off by the darkness of bitterness and oppressive shame.

### Canaanite Woman's story

Why is the story of the Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:21-28) my typical story of discrimination? First of all both Matthew and Mark refer to the woman through her ethnicity as a Canaanite. In that context, Canaanites were marginalized and despised because it was believed that they engaged in unethical trade practices (cf. Joel 3:4-8; Zech 9:9-13). So Matthew uses this as a derogatory term to emphasise the contrast between "pious" religious leaders and this foreign woman. After seeming to ignore her first cry for help, Jesus uses a Jewish term of abusive discrimination for Gentiles "dogs." In a way, Jesus' echoing the Jewish biased stigma against this woman and her daughter can be understood as an expression or critique of sexism and xenophobia that was common in his community. The healing of her daughter is a testimony of their dialogue and overcoming of the stereotypes and prejudices in the community.

### Tying my story, my Canaanite sister and the reality of SGBV rooted in sexism

Sexism as the discrimination on the basis of gender is at the base of all the gender-based violence. While gender is about power relations that often privilege men, according to WHO (2005) gender-based violence is the act "that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women (and men), including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life." Both my experience and that of the Canaanite woman in our biblical text suffered a lot of gender-based violence mainly through words as well as the general response from people we looked to for help.

When I became pregnant as referred above, there were some Christian brothers and sisters who went to Solomon to caution him against me on at least two accounts: firstly, so as to advise him against accepting his responsibility. The church I was fellowshiping with excommunicated me but did not excommunicate him. Secondly, they argued that even if he was sure that he was responsible, he still does not need to accept responsibility because they were sure that I had deliberately enticed him into sleeping with him. I was responsible for tempting him into falling into sin.

In each class I went into, I found written messages against me. For example: "She ate the forbidden fruit and tempted an innocent man of God to eat it too!" After I left, then Solomon started getting stigmatised more than when I was the main target.

Biblical texts were always used to justify my Christian community's discrimination against me as a sinner. I painfully learnt that sexual 'sins' are considered heavier sins than others

even though Jesus is so silent about them and especially if the so-called sexual sins have visible consequences through pregnancy.

### Questions for Dialogue

- a. Describe Moyo's experiences with reference to the use of the Bible; human dignity; gender-based violence and sexism.
- b. The Canaanite woman belonged to a marginalized and despised group. How did her dialogue with Jesus overcome prejudice and exclusion (Matthew 15:21-28)? What lessons can be learnt for dialogues between churches and LGBTI?

### Bible Study: Jesus Heals on the Sabbath

**Luke 13:10-17** New Living Translation (NLT)

#### Jesus Heals on the Sabbath

<sup>10</sup> One Sabbath day as Jesus was teaching in a synagogue, <sup>11</sup> he saw a woman who had been crippled by an evil spirit. She had been bent double for eighteen years and was unable to stand up straight. <sup>12</sup> When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Dear woman, you are healed of your sickness!" <sup>13</sup> Then he touched her, and instantly she could stand straight. How she praised God!

<sup>14</sup> But the leader in charge of the synagogue was indignant that Jesus had healed her on the Sabbath day. "There are six days of the week for working," he said to the crowd. "Come on those days to be healed, not on the Sabbath."

<sup>15</sup> But the Lord replied, "You hypocrites! Each of you works on the Sabbath day! Don't you untie your ox or your donkey from its stall on the Sabbath and lead it out for water? <sup>16</sup> This dear woman, a daughter of Abraham, has been held in bondage by Satan for eighteen years. Isn't it right that she be released, even on the Sabbath?"

<sup>17</sup> This shamed his enemies, but all the people rejoiced at the wonderful things he did.

#### Questions for dialogue

- a. This text is another example of conflicts in the teachings of the bible and where Jesus sets a principle that life must always prevail over law. What law were the religious leaders using to challenge Jesus' healing of the woman? How did Jesus answer them?
- b. What principles can we learn from Jesus when there is a conflict between the teachings of scripture and the needs of people? How can the principle of life and human dignity be used in our churches in response to LGBTI?

## **9. Article 4: The historical development in understandings of human sexuality, especially related to sexual minorities, in Africa and the present situation.**

***Lebohang Matela***

**Quotation from Article 4:** In addition, there is no evidence that: sexual orientation can be acquired through contact with LGBTI persons, same-sex orientation can be changed through ‘conversion’ or ‘reparative’ therapy or that people with LGB sexual orientation or transgender and intersex people recruit young people and are sexually abusive to children

### **Selected texts from the article for dialogue:**

#### **Human Sexuality: Definition**

The term sexuality means living (experiencing, realizing or actualizing) the particular sex in practice, (Van Rooyen 1991). Sexuality is a central aspect of being human throughout life and encompasses sex, gender identities, and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy, and reproduction. It is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviors, practices, roles and relationships. While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, religious and spiritual factors. (WHO)

#### **Aspects of Sexuality in Africa**

Sexuality can be understood in the African context through stories of creation, taboos, and codes of conduct.

#### ***Creation stories***

Creation stories are found in African religions and a common feature is that human beings appear on earth in pairs as male and female, as husband and wife right from the time of creation by divine providence. In most of these myths, the husband was created first and then the wife. In other myths, however, man and woman or husband and wife appear at the same time very much like in the first biblical story of creation in Gen. 1:26. The purpose of sexuality is procreation, although in Genesis chapter 2 the purpose of marriage is companionship, not to be alone. Makinwe et al in their paper entitled *Health sexuality in East, West, North, and Southern Africa* have noted that when it comes to matters of sexuality, most African societies insist on procreation as the primary purpose of human sexuality.

#### ***The role of taboo and secrecy in relation to sexuality.***

Human sexuality in Africa is enshrouded with great secrecy and hedged in with taboos that carry serious consequences if broken. To talk openly about sex and sexual orientation among people of different ages and in public is not easy. There are taboos that regulate words that must not be discussed in public in regard to human sexuality. The secrecy surrounding human

sexuality in Africa has also been underscored by Nganda who explains that traditionally sexual activity was performed in the house, at night when it was dark, when the animals and the children were fast asleep, preferably under some cover. The secrecy makes it difficult for parents to discuss sexual matters with their children. Studies which have been carried out in most African countries have found that both rural and urban parents, and even the professional community, feel that sexuality can only be discussed through a third party, who might be an aunt, an uncle or grandparent.

### ***Secrecy***

Secrecy is sustained by a strict code of conduct. Sex taboo forms a view that any deviation from it is deeply detested. The code stipulates the person with whom one may or may not enter into a sexual relationship (Ansah, 1989: 249).

### **Questions for Dialogue**

- a. Describe sexuality in your own words and give examples.
- b. Explain this statement: "Sexuality is a central aspect of being human"
- c. "Sexuality can be understood in the African context through stories of creation, taboos, and codes of conduct" Discuss this statement from your cultural context and give examples of creation stories, taboos, and codes of conduct. In what ways are these exclusive or inclusive of sexual diversity that includes LGBTI?

### **Example of facts on Sexuality: Homosexuality**

The Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) recently hosted a dialogue on diversity in a human sexuality based on the recently published ASSAf report titled Diversity in Human Sexuality: The purpose of the dialogue was to discuss implications of the report on policy, particularly in light of legislation on criminalizing homosexuality on the continent.

Some of the findings from the dialogue include evidence that sexuality is not a simple binary opposition of hetero/homosexual and normal/abnormal. Rather there are ranges of human variations, very little of which can justifiably be termed abnormal. Furthermore, there is biological evidence for the diversity of human sexualities and for sexual orientations in particular. The study done by LeVay and Harmer found two pieces of evidence in the structure of the human brain and a genetic link (Scientific American 1994). However, there are studies which challenge this biological evidence on the fact that even if genetic or neuro-anatomical traits turn out to be correlated with sexual orientation, causation is far from proved, (Byne 1994)

Significantly, there is lack of evidence to support the idea that the way parents bring up their children, or the relationships formed between children and parents, impact on sexual orientation. While the family environment may shape the way gender and sexuality are expressed orientation is not directly correlated to family upbringing.

In addition, there is no evidence that:

- i) sexual orientation can be acquired through contact with LGBTI persons,
- ii) same-sex orientation can be changed through ‘conversion’ or ‘reparative’ therapy
- iii) that sexual orientation or transgender and intersex people recruit young people and are sexually abusive to children.

However, there is clear evidence that more repressive environments not only pose a health threat to LGBTI but also fuel violence. Homophobia and hate crimes continue unabated in the African continent, where LGBTI people get attacked daily on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity. The LGBTI community continues to be at high risk of the twin pandemics of GBV and HIV and AIDS. High rates of HIV and AIDS amongst lesbians and bisexual women have been attributed to alarming incidences of rape and sexual violence suffered by this group. There is a shortage of targeted prevention and mitigation interventions for women who have sex with other women. Their vulnerability is brought by lack of understanding of the specific sexual practices of women who have sex with women, as well as lack of knowledge of their sexual and reproductive needs

### ***Implications***

The narrow definition of sexuality in Africa and the myths associated with LGBTI issues have many implications on sexual reproductive health and community’s wellbeing. Sexual and reproductive communication is most likely to promote healthy sexual development that reduces sexual risks. Communication is the principal means for parents to transmit sexual values, belief, expectations, and knowledge to their adolescents. Cultural taboos, shame and lack of communication skills hinder communication between parents and their children. The consequences of lack of parent-child sexuality communication include adolescents engaging in risky sexual behaviors with adverse health outcomes including unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV, (Ayelew, Mengistie & Semahegn, 2014). The myths surrounding LGBTI issues lead to heterosexism and homo-negativity exacerbating violence against LGBTI persons and creating barriers to their access to basic services including healthcare.

### **Questions for dialogue**

- a. Were there any aspects of the research on sexuality that surprised you or were new to you or that you were already familiar with?
- b. Name some of the myths about homosexuality that were disproved by research? Are some of the myths present in your community or are there different myths?
- c. What is the relationship between myths about LGBTI and violence?
- d. How can dialogue promote discussions on sexuality in the home, community, and church as a way of promoting healthy sexuality rooted in the dignity of all persons?

## Bible Study

### Two Texts on Eunuchs: Matthew 19:12 and Acts 8:26-31

#### Jesus' teaching about Eunuchs

Some are born as eunuchs, some have been made eunuchs by others, and some choose not to marry<sup>[e]</sup> for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven. Let anyone accept this who can.”  
Matthew 19:12

#### Eunuchs occupying positions of authority and power and worshipper of God and baptized disciple of Christ: Acts 8:26-31

<sup>26</sup> As for Philip, an angel of the Lord said to him, “Go south<sup>[b]</sup> down the desert road that runs from Jerusalem to Gaza.” <sup>27</sup> So he started out, and he met the treasurer of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under the Kandake, the queen of Ethiopia. The eunuch had gone to Jerusalem to worship, <sup>28</sup> and he was now returning. Seated in his carriage, he was reading aloud from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

<sup>29</sup> The Holy Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and walk along beside the carriage.”

<sup>30</sup> Philip ran over and heard the man reading from the prophet Isaiah. Philip asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?”

<sup>31</sup> The man replied, "How can I unless someone instructs me?" And he urged Philip to come up into the carriage and sit with him.

<sup>36</sup> As they rode along, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “Look! There’s some water! Why can’t I be baptized?”<sup>[d]</sup> <sup>38</sup> He ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.

Jesus was discussing eunuchs in the context of marriage and divorce between a woman and man and eunuchs as different personhood suggesting sexual or human diversity.

#### Discussion questions:

- a. Jesus described three types of eunuchs and what is the significance of stating that some are ‘born this way’?
- b. How does the eunuch who is different from male and female introduce sexual and gender diversity and what lessons can be learnt from Jesus’ acceptance of eunuchs?
- c. In Acts the Holy Spirit sent Philip to minister and explain the gospel to a eunuch – what does that teach us about the inclusive nature of the gospel - how does the action of the Holy Spirit, the obedience of Philip and baptism of the eunuch offer lessons for the church in their ministry to LGTBI?

## **10. Article 5: Multiple Challenges faced by LGBTI from Society by Nokuthula Dhladla**

**Quotation from Article 5:**“For most people in Southern African countries, families and churches are two of the most significant spaces in which socialization and community life occur and where social attitudes and ethical responses are formed”.

### **Selected texts from the article for dialogue**

#### **Personal challenges faced by LGBTI**

As members of the marginalized group, LGBTI persons face many challenges. They are stereotyped, isolated, discriminated, rejected, stigmatized, verbally abused, murdered, bullied, vulnerable to HIV infection and subjected to ‘corrective rape’. These are some of the multiple forms of violence experienced by LGTBI people that constitute a violation of their human dignity and right to a life free from violence and discrimination.

These experiences have negative psychological, spiritual and social effects on LGBTI people such as low-self-esteem, trauma, mental health, depression and limited access to health services; under-achieving or dropping-out of schools and universities; loneliness; un-integrated sexual and spiritual identity; homelessness; self- hate, anger, and suicide.

#### **LGBTI and Families**

For most people in Southern African countries, families and churches are two of the most significant spaces in which socialization and community life occur and where social attitudes and ethical responses are formed.

Families are important support structures as well as sources of identity and values that contribute to the wholeness of life such as love, compassion, and belongingness. The community and church inform the values of families and therefore many LGBTI are afraid of disclosing their status because of the views discussed previously. In this social climate of non-acceptance, many families resort to a range of strategies to correct their sexual orientation including seeking cures, deliverance, forcing them to marry someone of the opposite sex and in extreme cases rape by family members, particularly of lesbians. Families reject LGBTI because of fear of losing respect and status in the community and with the church.

#### **LGBTI and Workplace**

In countries like South Africa, the Bill of Rights prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender and it also includes a number of protections, relating to Labor and employment. Despite these progressive laws, there are still cases of discrimination against the LGBTI in the workplace and those who are seeking employment. LGBTI job seekers are often denied employment due to their sexual orientation or gender identity or because of so-called masculine or feminine style of dress code. In places of employment many experiences being passed over for promotion or training, regular animosity from colleagues and supervisors, name-calling, intimidation, and blackmail. Because of the

Christian context of this region, there are many instances where employers or supervisors or colleagues use the bible to condemn LGBTI persons. Further, there are no policies in place in many workplaces to handle violations against LGBTI.

### LGBTI and Churches

Churches are central to the faith and practice of Christians. This is the place where we gather together with other Christians in fellowship, prayer, worship, and teaching about the Christian way of life. The Bible is central to our faith and is the basis for our morals, beliefs, and practices. As we have discussed earlier, churches are divided on their interpretation of the bible on many issues including the status of LGBTI. Sadly churches like families are places where discrimination and hate occur the most for LGBTI persons.

Many churches fuel and facilitate a climate of intolerance through biblical interpretations of homosexuality that promote hate and intolerance that leads to practices of discrimination, stigma, hate, violence and even murder.

### LGBTI and Communities

Like churches, many LGBTI live in fear of harm from their communities. For example in some communities raping or killing an LGBTI person is praised and encouraged and those committing this violence are treated as heroes because of the belief that LGBTI is a choice that can be changed or disease that can be cured. Further many believe that LGBTI is ‘un-African’ and therefore has no place in their communities.

### **Questions for Dialogue**

- a. Describe the multiple forms of violence against LGBTI and the impact on their lives. Give examples from your context of cases of violence against LGBTI.
- b. Discuss this statement: “the church and family are the two places where discrimination and hate occur the most for LGBTI persons.”
- c. Can you think of ways in which churches and families can be transformed into safe places that support the dignity and rights of LGBTI?
- d. What role do you think dialogue can play in bridging the gap between LGBTI and their families, churches, workplaces, and communities?

## 11. Conclusion

The *Supplement* as mentioned in the introduction was commissioned after the meeting of Heads of churches, project coordinators and General Secretaries of FOCCISA, held in Johannesburg from 29<sup>th</sup> September – 1<sup>st</sup> October 2016, to discuss the topic “The role of the Churches in the context of marginalized groups such as LGBTBI people.” Five (5) papers/articles were presented at that meeting. These articles are discussed in the Supplement. The *Supplement* is also a continuation of the *One Body Series*. Three themes from the *One Body Series* were discussed as part of the introduction. These were *Human Dignity, Gender-Based Violence, and Humanity as One Body*. The method of the dialogue was explained and applied throughout the *Supplement*. The *Supplement* is an introduction to LGBTBI issues and does not claim to cover all aspects. There is information on additional resources at the end of the *Supplement* together with a *Glossary* of the terms used. Please consult the additional material so that you can learn more about LGBTBI issues in this region. All the countries in Southern Africa are included in this research.

In conclusion, the goal of the *Supplement* is that participants take the knowledge that they have learnt and apply it through concrete action plans that they can implement in their churches. Action is the goal of this Supplement! So act on what you know and together we can stop the violence against LGBTBI and contribute to a society free from all forms of marginalization, violence, and violations of human dignity. This is the way of Jesus and the calling of the churches.

### **Evaluation of Workshop and Way Forward**

Describe your experience of this workshop – what were the highlights and questions that you still have.

Evaluate the workshop in terms of strengths, weaknesses, and areas of improvement.

What is the way forward, the plan of action, in implementing what you have learnt? Be concrete, specific and give a time frame for your vision. Remember to start small and with what is possible.

Please send answers to these questions to: \_\_\_\_\_

## 12. Closing Liturgy

The closing liturgy is a time of prayer, confession, praise, thanksgiving, reflection, intercession, and commissioning to service based on action plans. Everyone is invited to participate and contribute.

### **Liturgy**

Opening Prayer and thanksgiving

Hymn: Amazing Grace

### **Bible Reading**

1 John 4

<sup>7</sup> Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

<sup>20</sup> If someone says, "I love God," but hates a fellow believer, <sup>[c]</sup> that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? <sup>21</sup> And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their fellow believers

Reflection on readings

Confession

Intercessory prayers

Lighting candle in memory of those who were killed in gender-based violence including LGBTI and their families.

Hymn/chorus

Prayer of dedication and commission to service

Hymn/chorus

Closing Prayer: Prayer of St Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console,

to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.  
Amen.

Benediction and final blessing.

## 13. Glossary

### Basic concepts

**Gender identity** is a person's perception of their gender and how they choose to identify themselves. I.e. man, woman or gender neutral.

**Transgender** is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression is dissimilar from the sex they were born with. Transgender people may identify as trans-women (male-to-female/MTF), trans-men (female-to-male/FTM), transsexual or gender variant.

**Sexual orientation** relates to a person's physical attraction to another person. Gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same. Transgender people can be straight, gay or bisexual.

**Lesbian** is a term used to describe a woman attracted to the same sex and women who do not identify as heterosexual.

**Gay** is a term used to describe individuals attracted to the same sex, though more commonly refers to men who do not identify as heterosexual

**Bisexual** is a person attracted to both men and women. This attraction may not be split equally between genders, and there may be a preference for one gender over others.

**Asexual** is a sexual orientation whereby a person has a lack or low level of sexual attraction to others and do not desire sex or to have sexual partners. An asexual person may be straight, gay, bisexual, transgender. Asexual people may be emotionally attracted to others and desire partnership, but may not wish to express that attraction sexually. Discrimination and prejudice directed at people based on their sexuality is called Aphobia.

**Homophobia** is a general term for negative attitudes toward members of LGBT community. These attitudes often translate into discrimination, different forms of violence and hate crimes. The term extends to bisexual and transgender people, but terms like biphobia and transphobia are used to emphasize specific prejudices against bisexual and transgender people.

**Transphobia** is a general term for negative attitudes towards members of the Trans-community.

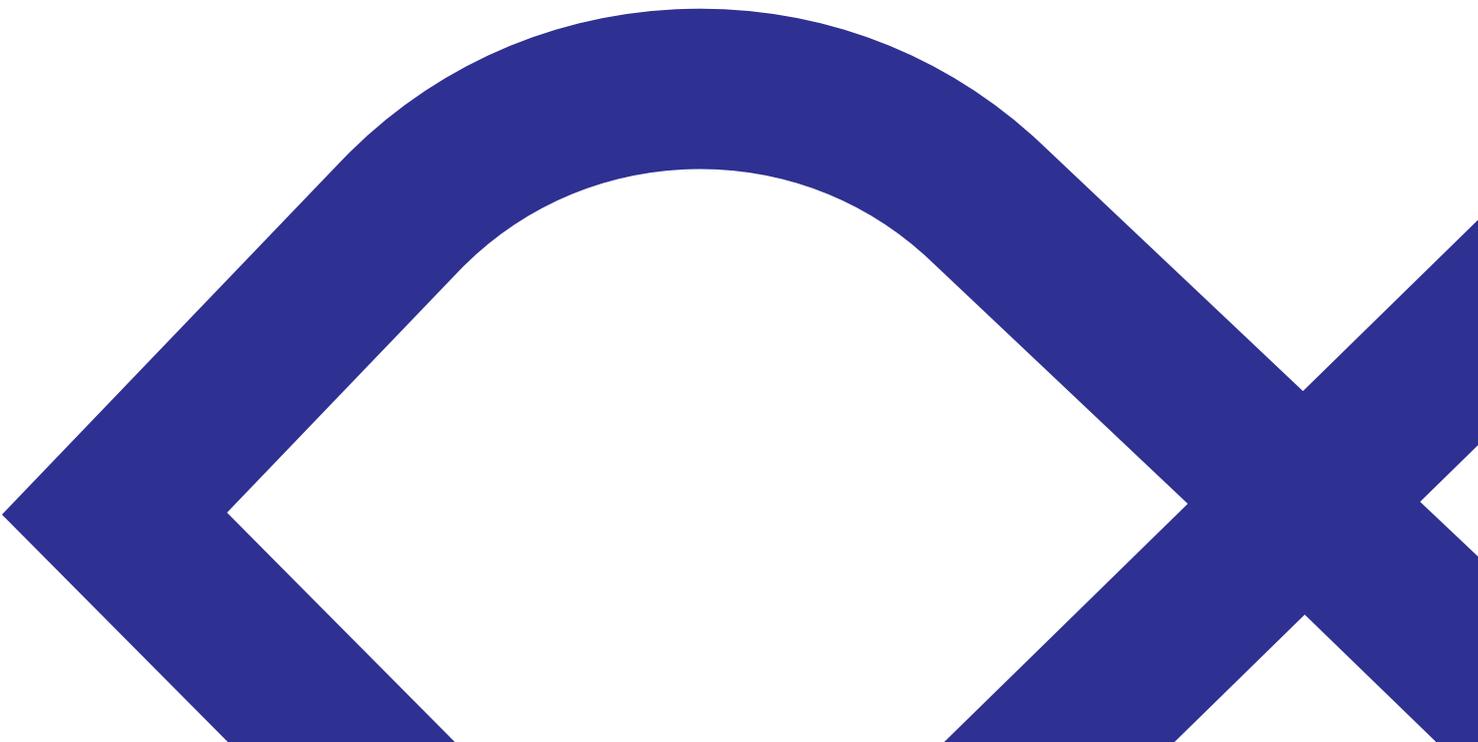
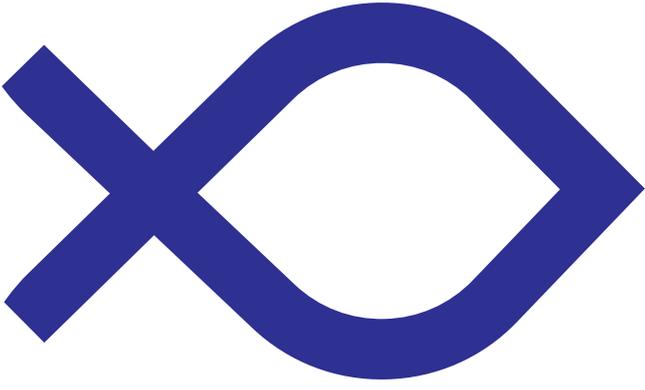
**Intersex** is a term used to describe people whose biological sex is unclear. Thus, internal sex organs and genitals differ from the two expected patterns of male or female.

**Queer** is a general term used to describe people who do not identify as straight or who have a gender-variant identity. It is often used interchangeably with LGBTIA, but due to its historical derogatory use, not all LGBTIA people use or embrace the term

## 14. Additional Resources

Other Foundation website has several resources on research on LGBTI in Southern Africa

<http://theotherfoundation.org/>





**“We are **one body**...if one part  suffers, every part suffers with it”  
(1 Corinthians 12:26a)**