



THE INDIAN LUTHERAN E-NEWS

The E-Newsletter of the United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India Vol.4 Iss.4 Jul. 01 - Aug. 31, 2009

Indian Lutheran Churches Urged to Give Heed to the Voices of the LGBT Community

CHENNAI/INDIA, 30 August, 2009 – Representatives from the Lutheran churches in Chennai, India; theological institutions; social work organizations; and the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT) community at the colloquium on "Indian Lutheran churches' involvement in the concerns related to the LGBT community" on 28 August in Chennai underlined the need to give heed to the voices of the LGBT community.

The colloquium was organized by the United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India (UELCI) in partnership with the Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute (Gurukul). The Lutheran church in India for the first time gathered to openly discuss on her involvement in the concerns related to the LGBT community.

The [Indian] Lutheran church has been silent about the [homosexual] issue until the recent repealing of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) by the Delhi High Court. The repealing of the Section 377 by the Delhi High Court had evoked critical debates from diverse factions around India. "It is a challenge that the Indian church and the society will have to face if the Indian government amends the High Court ruling," cautioned Rev. Dr. Augustine Jeyakumar the Executive Secretary of UELCI in his inaugural address. He further added, "This [colloquium] could serve as a platform to broaden our parochial tendency, a platform to be open to hear the challenges from the LGBT community who plead for their sense of "belongingness" in our society."

Stigmatization and discrimination against the LGBT community have been prevalent for ages in the predominantly conservative India. Rev. Jagdish, senior pastor of the TELC resorted to the Old Testament and Pauline passages to assert 'homosexuality is a sin.' "Same sex

relationships," said Dr. Shanthi Davidar, consultant psychiatrist of the CSI Rainey Hospital, "is unethical and unaccepted."

Rev. Dr. Manoharan, director of the Gurukul college in his keynote address pointed that the Indian Lutheran church faced similar admonition as 'unbiblical' when ordaining women and ministering among the people living with HIV/AIDS but now the same is seen as successful and right. "The context changes and we need to reread the Scripture in order to address the current issues – in this case, homosexuality," he said. Voluminous studies have been made on the LGBTs but till date no concrete or decisive biological theories on them have evolved.

"God created me as I am," boldly confessed Gabriel, a gay participant. "To condemn and ridicule a homosexual without realizing the anatomy of the person's body is not right," remarked another gay participant, Teja. 'We must reexamine our understanding of sin in the light of the Lutheran doctrine of being both sinner and justified by grace in order to avoid any judgmental tendency.'

C O N T E N T S	Indian Lutheran Churches Urged ...	1
	Violence Persists in Orissa	2
	International Youth Day	3
	Consultation on Gender Justice	3
	HIV/AIDS Programmes	3
	New Colleague	3