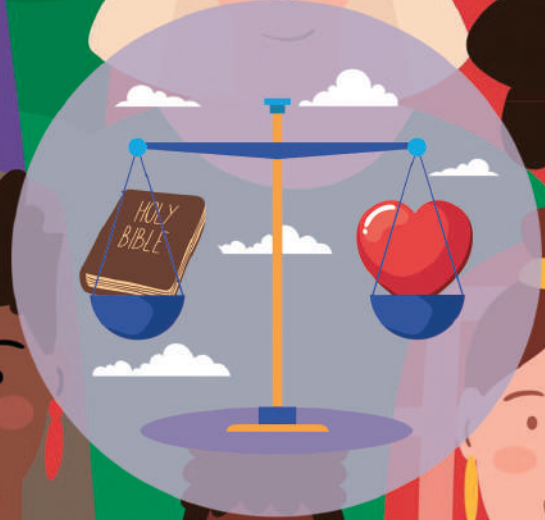


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# Truth & Love

Biblical View on LGBTQIA++



## A Man-made Rainbow Society

As teenagers, we come across difficult situations which make us prone to commit mistakes. During the different phases of our life, overthinking can cause distraction. One such distraction which is the most trending among the GEN-Z era is 'Homosexuality'. Homosexuality means two people of the same sex getting attracted to each other and entering a relationship.

Today, those involved in promotion have given this a new tag: #LovelsLove. If we look around carefully, we may observe that even the Government to some extent has accepted this. But, according to Science, based on a basic law from Physics which states, "Two opposite poles attract while two similar poles repel." According to the Holy Bible, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth". And God created humans male and female - in His own image." God did not create homosexuals and neither did He ever want His creation to get attracted to the same gender. He created Adam (Male) and Eve (Female) and blessed them to prosper in their lives.

Countries like Korea, Thailand and Taiwan among many others

support homosexuality in new ways. Creating dramas is one of those ways. A new 'genre of drama' is trending nowadays, known as BL (Boy's Love) and GL (Girl's Love) in which the actors openly film whatever the Directors say and promote homosexuality. If we compare the ratio of homosexuals, then definitely the Asian Countries are leaders. But not all Asian countries promote homosexuality, rather some vehemently oppose it. Countries like Pakistan and Iran for example, prohibit homosexuality and it is punishable there. According to a few people, homosexuality are promoted in some of the religions. The fact is they are promoting love and compassion in a relationship. I would go as far as to say that, not even a single religion promotes homosexuality. Being a homosexual is considered a great sin in Islam as well as in Christianity, and both strictly prohibit unnatural relationship of the same gender.

May the next generation be guided by the Word to discern right from wrong and make wise decisions. Let us hope that the upcoming generation (Gen-Alpha) will be more keen and impactful.



**Akriti Tiwari** is a 15 year old, 11<sup>th</sup> class student. She loves to read books and if she gets an opportunity, writes as well. She loves capturing the beautiful creation of God everywhere she goes, likes to make new friends. For her, writing this article was a pretty good opportunity, because she could reflect on this particular topic.

# Truth and Love

**T**ruth and Love are the two essential marks of effective and fruitful communication in any relationship. Paul exhorts that speaking the truth in love or with love is essential for Christian Community to grow into maturity and become like Christ. Truth is a tool to build up, rooted in genuine care and compassion (Eph 4:15). The Bible reveals the truth about God, Who is Truth and Love (Is 65:16; Jn 14:6; 1 Jn 4:16).

**The Truth about Human Dignity:** Humans are created in God's image as male and female (Gen 1:26-27). In marriage, a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife (Gen 2:24). This clarifies the inherent dignity and value of every person, regardless of their sexuality or gender identity (Gen 1:27; Jms 2:8).

**Truth about God's Love in Redemption:** Since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, every one needs God's grace (Rom 3:23). The Bible condemns homosexuality and describes it as "detestable". It was contrary to the moral law laid down by God for Israel " (Lev 18:22; 20:13; Rom 1:26-27). God punished Sodom and Gomorrah for it (Gen 19:1-29). The Bible makes a clear distinction between the sin and the sinner. God hates sin that He punishes the sinner with eternal death. God's motive is love in sending His son Jesus to restore corrupt humanity. Jesus' death for sinners does not condone sin, but demonstrates sin's consequences, for He became the sinner's substitute on the Cross. God's love for the world includes everyone and even LGBTQIA++ (Jn 3:16).

Jesus refused to condemn the woman caught in adultery but demonstrated compassion and urged her to leave the life of sin (Jn 8:11). We, as disciples of Christ, should follow His footsteps and show grace (Lk 6:37), treat others with love and respect, build relationships based on compassion and explain biblical truths about sexuality and marriage with gentleness and respect (1 Pet 3:15,16). We should not judge or condemn, but forgive and guide the erring to God, Who is gracious, compassionate and offers forgiveness to the repentant.



***Vivekananda Sunder Singh Babu***

+91-9440252002  
campus.link@uesi.in

## CAMPUSLINK VOL. 26, NO. 3

### Hon. Editor

Athma Soruban

### Editorial Team

Sunder Singh Babu

James Sebastian

Smitha George

Ruth Collins

Poonam Sotra

Samarpan Kumar

### Cover design & Lay-out

Prince Edwin. P

E-mail: campus.link@uesi.in

### Website:

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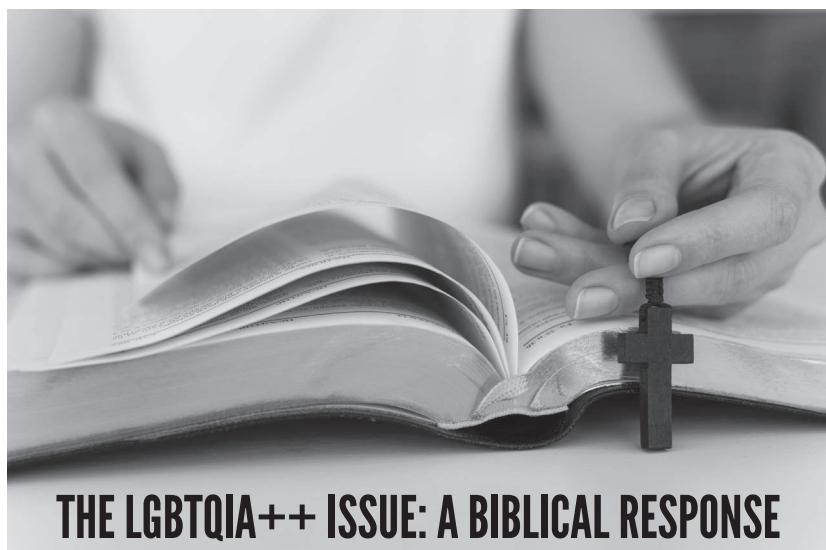
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## THE LGBTQIA++ ISSUE: A BIBLICAL RESPONSE

Pride month, gay rights, drag queens, preferred pronouns, queer theology... this mishmash of sociocultural and even “theological” terms and concepts inundate us wherever we turn in today’s world. Fifty years ago, no one would have thought that the reality of humanity’s division into two sexes — male and female — would be questioned, much less under attack. Yet that is the reality of the world we now live in.

Changes in the secular culture are also changing our vocabulary. “Gender” no longer means only male or female. According to *healthline.com* there are 68 terms that describe gender – and they keep changing on a daily basis. There is even disagreement on the number of biological sexes.

### **A summary of world views**

*Sex Assigned at Birth:* Based on the biological characteristics of males and females, observed at birth, such as reproductive organs, chromosomes, hormones, etc.

*Gender:* The socially constructed characteristics of women and men – such as norms, roles and relationships. While most people are born either male or female, they are taught appropriate norms and behaviours. When individuals or groups do not “fit” established gender norms they often face discriminatory practices. Gender is a social, psychological and cultural construct, developed in the process of socialization. A person’s gender may or may not correspond to their biological sex. Gender is more about identity. People that do

# Lead

not identify as male or female are often grouped under the umbrella terms 'non-binary', but the range of gender identifications is in reality unlimited.

*Gender expression:* Gender is something we express, sometimes intentionally, and sometimes without thinking. We communicate our gender in a number of ways, for example, by our appearance or our interaction.

*Sexual orientation* is about who you're attracted to and want to have relationships with.

Sexual orientations include gay, lesbian, straight, bisexual, and asexual.

The ever-changing acronym LGBTQIAP++ denotes *lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual* and *pansexual*, with the plus sign indicating all of the other gender identities and sexual orientations.

## **Gender dysphoria**

Some people who are transgender will experience "gender dysphoria," which refers to psychological distress that results from an incongruence between one's sex assigned at birth and one's gender identity. Though gender dysphoria often begins in childhood, some people may not experience it until after puberty or

much later. (*American Psychiatric Association*)

## **What is wrong with transgenderism?**

Such people are born with normal anatomy and physiology, but experience a mental 'disconnect' with their normal body function of sexuality. This leads often to tampering with their normal anatomy and physiology through "Sex Reassignment", including hormones and surgery. In their lifestyle, sexually active transgenders are usually homosexual. Many of them experience severe mental stress and depression, with a high suicide rate.

## **"Born this way"?**

Extensive research to establish a biological connection with homosexuality has failed to produce any positive result. There could be genetic and environmental influences here like in every other behavioural trait. Much of the known environmental influence appears to be intra-uterine, and there is no convincing evidence that social environment plays a significant part. Ganna, A. *et al.* (2019), who led the largest study to date on the genetic basis of sexuality (477,522 individuals), reported just five spots on the human genome that are linked to same-sex sexual behaviour — but none of the markers are reliable

enough to predict someone's sexuality. "There is no 'gay gene,'" says lead study author Andrea Ganna, a geneticist at the Broad Institute of MIT.

### **Are intersex persons transgender?**

People who are intersex have genitals, chromosomes or reproductive organs that don't fit into a male/female sex binary. Being intersex may be evident at birth, childhood, later in adulthood or never. This condition does not affect their gender orientation, though some of them might experience gender dysphoria.

### **What about eunuchs?**

Eunuchs are typically castrated men, and were traditionally employed as keepers of the harem or in other offices in the royal court. In the Indian subcontinent, the small community of *hijra* are transgender or castrated people who live in communities that follow a kinship system known as *guru-chela* system.

### **Gender-affirming Treatment: What does medical science say?**

There was a time when opinion was strong for medical/surgical transition for any teenager who felt a strong disconnect between their "sex assigned at birth" and their gender orientation. This included puberty blockers, hormone therapy,

and "gender reassignment surgery". Of late, a shift is taking place in the ruthless promotion of this kind of tampering and mutilation. A new position statement from the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) stresses the importance of a mental health evaluation for people with gender dysphoria – in particular for children and adolescents – before any firm decisions are made on whether to prescribe hormonal treatments to transition, or perform surgeries, often referred to as "gender-affirming care". (*Psychiatrists Shift Stance on Gender Dysphoria, Recommend Therapy*, Oct. 2021)

### **What does the Bible say?**

The biblical view of gender and sex takes into account not only the creation of a biological man and a biological woman, but also love, marriage, fidelity, and reproduction.

"So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion ..." Gen. 1:27-28, NKJV).

The Bible teaches that God made us male or female, and no matter our own feelings or confusion, we should act in accordance with the



# Lead

biological reality of God's good design.

The Bible knows no other gender categories besides male and female. There is an organic unity of biological sex and gender identity. This is why male and female are (uniquely) the type of pair that can reproduce.

Paul speaks of homosexual partnerships as deviating from the natural relations of male-female sexual intercourse (Rom. 1:26-27). If the binary of male and female is God's idea, then it stands to reason that the confusion of these realities would be displeasing to God. In the Old Testament, among the sexual sins punishable by death, incest, adultery, bestiality and homosexuality are all placed in the same category (Lev 18:22; 20:10-16). The New Testament explicitly upholds the sexual laws that were mandated for God's people in the Old Testament. "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality,... will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit

of our God." (1 Cor. 6:9-11, ESV).

It is important to understand that the Bible prohibits all kinds of sexual promiscuity: heterosexual as well as homosexual. There is simply no scriptural support for endorsing sexual immorality (i.e., sexual activity outside the bond of heterosexual marriage) for anyone, no matter what his or her personal sexual feelings may be.

## **Homosexual orientation and homosexual behaviour**

A common argument by some evangelical Christians is: "Homosexual orientation is involuntary and so not sinful. Only homosexual behaviour is." This objection bases moral accountability upon whether one has the ability to choose his proclivities. But this is not how the Bible speaks of sin and judgment. There are all manner of predispositions that we are born with that the Bible characterizes as sin: e.g., pride, anger, anxiousness etc. Why would we put same-sex attraction in a different category? Jesus says that all such sins proceed from the heart and that we are therefore morally accountable for them (Mk 7:21). The very nature of sin is that it is not freely chosen. We are in bondage to sin but still accountable to God's righteous judgment of our actions. Therefore,



it cannot be maintained that a homosexual orientation is morally neutral because it is involuntary.

*... there is the need to let go of un-Christlike biases and bring down barriers within our minds and churches – not by inclusive tolerance, but by loving confrontation.*

The canon of Scripture is unequivocal in its presentation of homosexual behaviour as a part of human depravity. There is not one syllable of Scripture that condones or supports homosexual behaviour. Homosexual practice, like any other deviant behaviour, is not irreversible. We are all born into iniquity, but Scripture teaches that the power of the gospel is mightier than the power of sin and its multitude of manifestations.

### **What should be our response to the LGBTQIA community?**

We recognise that all of us are sinners, and that the only true hope for sinful people – whatever our sexuality – is in Jesus Christ. We affirm God's love and concern for all human beings, whatever their sexuality, and so repudiate

all attitudes and actions which victimise or diminish people whose affections are directed towards people of the same sex. We affirm that marriage is an institution created by God in which one man and one woman enter into an exclusive relationship for life. Marriage is the only form of partnership approved by God for sexual relations. We do not accept that holding these theological and ethical views on biblical grounds is in itself homophobic.

So, as we reach out, let's do so with compassion. However, compassion is not affirmation. The love of Christ is *inclusive*, but the Church, as the body of Christ, is *exclusive*. Therefore, such persons cannot be accepted into the full fellowship of the Church without any change in their sinful convictions and practices. But there is the need to let go of un-Christlike biases and bring down barriers within our minds and churches – not by inclusive tolerance, but by loving confrontation.



**Mathew Jacob** is a senior member of the Ernakulam unit of Kerala EGF. He is an ophthalmologist, now retired from hospital practice. In UESI circles he is a Bible teacher, with a special interest in doctrines, Pauline epistles, and Christian home. He is married to Susan, a gynecologist, and they have three married boys and seven grandkids. He can be reached at [mathew1820@gmail.com](mailto:mathew1820@gmail.com)



## How Can Christians Respond to the Challenge of LGBTQIA++ in Public Discourse?

**W**hat do students and unmarried persons of the Union of Evangelical Students of India know about sex? Have they sinlessly fled youthful lusts (2 Tim 2:22), so that they know only the urge? Or have they, men or women, committed the sin of lust (Mt 5:28), and maybe more? More likely, they have attempted experiments, sometimes as adolescents ignorant of the phrase ‘same sex’. Sexual sin is perhaps the most universal sin that binds Christians together, single or married, in lifelong and repeated repentance before Christ.

To adhere to the godly ideal for any area of life, such as sex, is goodness defined by the absence of sin? No: sin is almost always the corruption of something that was created good (Gen 1:31). It is the good that comes first. A few weeks before our marriage, a senior graduate lent my future wife and me a book, ‘*Sexual Happiness in Marriage*’ by

Herbert Miles. The author describes the good of husband-wife sexual intercourse in these terms:

*“A piano and a violin are two different instruments, very different. Yet, when two musicians, playing the instruments, do the right thing, at the right time, in the right attitude, beautiful music is the result. Likewise, the physical bodies of a bride and groom are different, very different. Yet, when they in marriage as husband and wife do the right thing, at the right time, and in the right attitude, they will have beautiful sexual harmony as they express their love to each other.”*

God created sex, when He created Adam and Eve – the only species that has sexual intercourse face-to-face, God’s image embracing God’s image, in an exclusive, exhilarating union. Alternative sexual activity that the LGBTQIA++ community posits bears no comparison: mutual masturbation is not biological,

complementary, or even sexual intercourse.

I tried to express, in public discourse, the unique goodness of opposite-sex marriage (OSM) when I submitted an intervention in the Supreme Court of India against legalising same-sex marriage (SSM) in 2023. *The Hindu* newspaper quoted online from my application:<sup>1</sup>

*“Som Thomas, who introduced himself as a retired cis-gender male engineer, said laws regarding marriage must not be changed to accommodate the “insubstantial concept” of same-gender or gender-neutral ‘spouses’, since marriage is substantively male-female sexual intercourse of a singular kind. He said that a man-woman sexual intercourse was in a “category of its own”. “The necessary condition for marriage is one-man-one-woman sexual intercourse with the possibility of simultaneous climax through stimulation of and by the sexual organs alone, and no other limbs or artifices. No other sexual intercourse bears resemblance either to the physical act or to its most significant possible consequence, namely conception,” Mr. Thomas argued.”*

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1. The various petitions around same sex marriage, *The Hindu*, April 18, 2023, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/the-various-petitions-around-same-sex-marriage/article66748868.ece>

When I subsequently spoke in the Supreme Court, on 10 May, 2023<sup>2</sup>, I again emphasised that in every Indian law, sexual intercourse of a specific kind (man-woman) initiated marriage, and its violation (through non-consummation or adultery) could end the marriage. I asked the Court that if two women friends lived together, what activity would substantively convert their relationship into a marriage. The Court correctly understood my words, that mere vows never defined a marriage – sex always did, an act which two women cannot perform, and men can only mimic (Rom 1:26-27).

Only in a context in which husband and wife respect each other as equals, and serve each other as ‘one flesh’ (1 Cor 7:5; Eph 5:31), can simultaneous climax take place. The journalist who quoted me was evidently captivated by the uniqueness of what I said, without knowing how Genesis 2:24-25 it was in spirit. I had been present, once before, in the Supreme Court in 2018, with an intervention application to prevent the misuse of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (after I had done a dissertation on its decriminalisation during my PG Diploma in Human Rights Law course). I never forgot how the

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2. <https://youtu.be/B7sRPIGGf6w?t=11258>



judges' minds were visibly captured back then by the false propaganda that same-sex activity is 'natural'. Therefore, in the 2023 same-sex marriage (SSM) case, I first sought to show that it was unnatural. I submitted medical paper references that showed the unnatural diseases caused by habitual male-male penetration of the penis into the anus, for example – an addiction that no other animal develops. I supplied research on the higher suicide rates among SSM couples even in Scandinavian countries that had long legalised and celebrated such relationships. A surgeon once told me that a doctor who fails to tell his patient, 'Cigarette-smoking is injurious to health,' should be charged with medical negligence – and so should a doctor who does not warn, 'Anal sex is injurious to health.'

Those who believe in evolution – theistic or otherwise – would further agree that same-sex sexuality is against the principle of 'survival of the fittest': the fit would reproduce for new life to be conceived, and cared for, in natural ways, not artificial means like surrogate motherhood. In her book, 'Them Before Us', Katy Faust<sup>3</sup> speaks

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3. Katy Faust and Stacy Manning, *Them Before Us: Why We Need a Global Children's Rights Movement* (Nashville: Post Hill Press, 2021). <https://thembeforeus.com/>

from personal experience as a child of two lesbian women, only one of whom was her biological mother. The person Ms Faust constantly yearned for was her father, who existed, but was not allowed to parent her.

With those and many other available facts that point to the damage that LGBTQIA++ lifestyles tend to inflict on children, adults and society at large, one can be confident in taking a public stand on behalf of the 'good' sex of God and 'good' parenting, a heritage that has made Indians among the best knowledge workers in the world. Over a decade ago, with whatever knowledge that I then had, I politely raised, within the channels available at my employer MNC, repeated questions when 'Pride' events became *propaganda* rather than *protection* against non-discrimination. I did not bring the Bible into the discussion. It also began my continuing journey to challenge in public forums the prideful sin that devalues the 'good' sex of God and the 'good' parenting to which He has called creation.

My employers recognised an absence of hate, so there was no 'homophobia' complaint against me. HR, NGO and other personnel (including in some theological circles) often ride the LGBTQIA++

movement to further their own careers. So 'love' for transgenders and homosexuals is not a part of public discourse, except by being a political 'ally' of their cause. In reality, like any human being, every LGBTQIA++ person has a 'love language', and personal friendship is what a LGBTQIA++ person would value most. Their hypersexualised behaviour, the existence of 'gay bars', etc, are often just a desperate expression of this vacuum. God has designed 'good' sex, but if a partner (even a heterosexual one) sees the relationship primarily in sensual terms, then the other partner can feel devalued (and suicidal in the more tragic cases).

To actually minister to LGBTQIA++ individuals, with unselfish, unjudgmental love, is thus a challenging ministry for Christians, whose love can often be conditional on an individual's showing signs of change – which may never take place. Among traditional Christians, a person attending the fellowship:

- a) is expected to BEHAVE like a Christian
- b) as a result of which he or she is assumed to have BELIEVED
- c) and then the person is allowed to BELONG to the community.

Whereas, any unbeliever comes with:

- a) a desire to BELONG among people – at least a handful – who unconditionally love him or her
- b) as a result of which the person may BELIEVE (or may not)
- c) and only on having a saving faith in Christ can the person have the Holy Spirit's help to BEHAVE in transformed ways.

To offer unreserved belongingness to unbelievers, including prostitutes and the unbelieving children of Christians in the fellowship, is a ministry for which easy models do not exist. Whereas Jesus offered the bread dipped in the wine even to Judas (who was responsible to God for pretending to take it while in unbelief). Rosaria Butterfield explains in her book, 'The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert', how her life (as a then practising lesbian and non-Christian) was transformed by the loving, open home of a Christian family. Like Dr. Butterfield's books, her YouTube videos on the subject are some of the most informative.

Some Christian groups resolve the need to avoid judgement by an emotional compromise that celebrates the sin (in this instance, sexual sin) in order to make the sinner feel comfortable. As a recent WSJ newspaper article put it, many LGBTQIA++ victories in the US "were partly because of



a crucial change in messaging. While earlier same-sex marriage campaigns had emphasized a dry, legalistic argument about the civil rights and benefits that marriage confers, in 2012 activists pivoted to accentuating love, commitment and universal family values. This change appealed to people’s emotions and helped campaigners reach religious people and conservatives.”<sup>4</sup>

To intend to unconditionally love the sinner (at least at the level of personal friendship, if not as a community), while hating that one universal failing within us which tempts us to love the sin as well, is perhaps the place of moral tension from where a forgiven Christian must learn to respond to the challenge of LGBTQIA++ in private as well as public discourse.

4. How 20 Years of Same-Sex Marriage Changed America, The Wall Street Journal, May 13, 2024, <https://www.wsj.com/politics/policy/how-20-years-of-same-sex-marriage-changed-america-670758bd>

politics/policy/how-20-years-of-same-sex-marriage-changed-america-670758bd



**Som Thomas** studied mechanical engineering in the 1980s at what is now IIT Roorkee. The EU in the Roorkee hostel was instrumental in his spiritual formation. Now retired, most of his working years were lived in Bengaluru, along with his wife, Shyni, a product of MA College of Engineering, Kothamangalam, and its EU. They have 2 sons and 2 grand-daughters. Reach him at [som\\_thomas@yahoo.co.in](mailto:som_thomas@yahoo.co.in)

## THE ART OF MAKING ME

Shattered dreams, broken heart  
That’s all I bring to You  
Lord, I can’t take this up  
On my own

But Your promises, never fail  
To the hiding place I come  
The Preserver of my soul  
Embrace me now

Your ways are higher than mine  
Nothing thwarts Your perfect plan for me  
The God Who made the universe  
Is in the art of making me

No, nothing stands against  
Your will  
Who can counsel the  
King of Kings?  
The God Who calls me His own will lead me on

Surround me with Your  
steadfast love  
And shouts of deliverance  
Let me see Your glory

I leave it to the Potter’s hands  
Make me as You will  
Whatever be Your plan  
I say, “Amen”.



**Tiny S Alex**, Calicut EGF. Reach her at [tinypes@gmail.com](mailto:tinypes@gmail.com)



## The Queer Among Us

As I write this article, I wonder how important the whole issue of LGBTQIA++ is in the Indian context or if this is something of importance mainly in the West and has been imported into India. The entire universe of LGBTQI is vast, and very few of us have the expertise to study or understand it. Our limited understanding is mainly limited to same-sex relationships, which traditionally, the church has condemned based on the authority of scripture in verses like Romans 1:26-27 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.

However, the world and dynamics of the LGBTQIA++ is a lot more than men sleeping with men or women with women and cannot be swept under the carpet by using the odd scripture. For instance, many of the terminologies used today did not come into use till the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the study of the human mind began to advance. For instance, the

commonly used word “lesbian” did not have any sexual connotations for centuries. The association with female homosexuality came much later, around the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The word “Queer,” too, did not have sexual connotations till recently. It meant what it has always meant – “strange,” “odd,” “peculiar,” or “eccentric. The ++ sign only indicates that the queer universe is only expanding and not contracting.

While the Bible condemns sexual relations between those of the same gender, and so must we, it also needs to be understood that not everyone who identifies themselves as “Queer” is sexually active. There is a need to understand the nuances of sexual orientation and sexual behavior.

Sexual orientation is a complex issue, and scientists have not pinpointed a single cause. There



is growing evidence that it likely arises from a combination of factors, including:

**Genetics:** Studies suggest that genes play a role, but there isn't a single "gay gene" or equivalent for other orientations. Multiple genes likely interact in some way to influence sexual orientation.

**Prenatal hormones:** Exposure to hormones before birth may be a factor. For instance, some studies suggest higher prenatal testosterone levels in females might be linked to a higher chance of same-sex attraction.

**Environmental factors:** The exact role of the environment is unclear, but it likely doesn't involve things like childhood experiences affecting your orientation.

No single factor determines orientation: it is likely a complex interplay of genetics, hormones, and other unknown factors. Genetics isn't destiny: even if genes play a role, it doesn't mean orientation is predetermined. Sexual orientation is natural. Regardless of the cause, being LGBTQIA+ is a natural variation in human sexuality. We can play around with the question of who is responsible for this sexual orientation at the end of the day. Should the concerned individuals be blamed? Can they and should

they be changing their orientation, and is there an onus on them to change, or are other factors at play?

In John 9, we have the well-known story of Jesus healing the blind man. The disciples question Jesus, assuming the blindness stemmed from the man's sin or his parent's sin (Jn 9:2). Jesus rejects this idea, stating, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned" (Jn 9:3). Centuries later, the question still echoes and rises to the surface when we encounter people who are "different." The question still bubbles up - sin is involved, and the person or their family must take responsibility. We often, however, pass over Jesus' response to the disciple's question. Jesus offers a different explanation: "But this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life" (Jn 9:3). This suggests that the man's blindness served a purpose, allowing Jesus to demonstrate God's power through healing.

Although we have moved a certain distance, disability, especially those born with conditions like Down's syndrome or other visible disabilities, once raised the same question - who is the sinner here? Perhaps they were not always spoken out loud, but the question lingered in the air. And before that, there was leprosy.

Jesus told us that the poor will always be with us. People who are different from us in how they express their identity differently, too, will be. So how do we relate to them, bond with them if we come across any, and, most importantly, demonstrate grace towards them?

The traditional Evangelical view is drawn from scripture, which we have already seen. Evangelicals believe the Bible condemns same-sex relationships based on interpretations of verses like Romans 1:26-27 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. While that is fine, what is often ignored is that not all Queer people are in a relationship of any kind, let alone a physical one. They lead mostly incredibly lonely lives even if they are educated and wealthy. Films like *“Aligarh,”* where the protagonist, a University Professor, is socially ostracized and suspended from his job after his orientation becomes public, are instructive. Based on a true story, the Professor challenges his suspension in court, but by the time the verdict comes, the lonely man has already committed suicide. I have known a few Queer people personally who knew very well that their behavior, mannerisms, and orientation were considered deviant and tried their best to change and conform. They accompanied their parents to psychiatrists, therapists,

temples, churches, mosques, as well as sundry healers, hoping that something would click and prove to be the elusive fix. But nothing did. At the end of it all, they were more isolated and friendless than before. Christians may be lonelier than most if they have such identities because they know which way the wind will blow if their cover is ever blown.

How should we respond to such people among us? Philip Yancey’s book *“What’s So Amazing About Grace”* critiques how some Christians treat homosexuality and argues for a more gracious approach. Yancey was troubled by the perception that Christians were primarily known for what they opposed, like homosexuality, rather than God’s grace. Yancey doesn’t endorse same-sex relationships, but he argues for a more compassionate and welcoming approach to the LGBTQIA+ people in the church.

In the Catholic Church, Pope Francis emphasizes compassion and acceptance toward LGBTQ+ individuals. While the church’s official teaching describes homosexuality as “intrinsicly disordered,” it also calls for treating gay people with respect and avoiding unjust discrimination.

In the Gospel of Matthew chapter 25, we read the following: *“For*



*I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger, and you invited me in, I needed clothes, and you clothed me, I was sick, and you looked after me, I was in prison, and you came to visit me."* Jesus says that whenever his disciples served any of these, they served Him. When these verses talk of visiting people in prison, it doesn't imply that the reasons for which the person is in prison are condoned. It just means ministering to a person with needs God wants to be met.

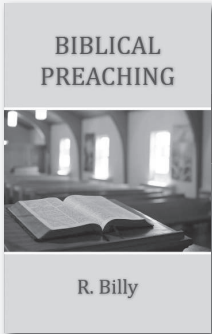
Most of us will never understand the struggles of an LGBTQIA ++ person - the sniggers, the stigma, being overlooked for jobs because

their mannerisms and deportment are different. The social as well as the economic poverty too. Their world which is far more than two people of the same gender, which is all we know and talk about. Their isolation is absolute. The loneliness is real. Their hunger, thirst, and nakedness are also often real. The abandonment and cold looks as they lie sick on a hospital bed are real. When in the Gospels, Jesus teaches us to minister to those in need, He does not ask for a spiritual report card of those who will be served. He simply encourages serving, and in so doing, we are assured that we are serving Jesus. Can we see Jesus in the gazes of those who are Queer and others we are so used to "othering"? Let us try.



**Shantanu Dutta**, a product of Pune ICEU is a doctor by training and formerly served with the Indian Air Force. Subsequently he served with numerous national and international organizations serving in the integral mission space. Reach him at [shantanud@gmail.com](mailto:shantanud@gmail.com)

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# LGBTQIA+

~ A Christian attempt at understanding and possibly engaging!

The author recommends a 3-pronged approach for those attempting to engage with this complex cultural milieu. The 3 key Christian impediments that come up before us as we approach this sexuality-gender revolution, are -

- (i) *the knowledge gap,*
- (ii) *the understanding gap*
- (iii) *the wisdom gap (This article deals in a cursory way with remedying the understanding gap & the wisdom gap)*

The other 2 parts of this 3-part article can be accessed at:

<https://blog.saftapologetics.com/the-christian-response-to-homosexuality-part-1/>

<https://blog.saftapologetics.com/the-christian-response-to-homosexuality-part-3/>

## A. Understanding is key!

Goethe famously said, “everyone hears only what he understands!” This couldn’t be truer as we

attempt to respond to the issue of homosexuality and gender identity. Understanding is always in rare supply. The Bible has a *lot* to teach us on the virtue of understanding. If we are to help someone from this community, the primary thing to work towards is to try and *understand* the issue at hand: “The *simple* (read, foolish) takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in airing his opinion” (Prov 18:2).

## B. What are we missing?

### 1. Understanding Oversimplification

The issue of same-sex attraction (SSA) and ‘gender-expression’ is a very complex one on several levels. The bio-psycho-social interactions and interplay that result in SSA and Gender Identity issues are established but seldom taken

seriously. The two narratives that keep popping up in conversations are - *"I'm born this way"* (biology) and *"It's my life"* (autonomy). Now, that is profoundly simplistic and detrimental for those within the LGBTQIA+ space, as they refuse to see the complexity of the issue and refrain from moving from a faulty diagnosis to remedy, if I may use that medical analogy.

Those that attempt to engage with them are given very little - biology and self-expression, to work around, and provide remedy (not that they are asking). So, oversimplifying this complex issue at hand needs to be understood as a major barrier preventing any inroads for giving help and/or a perceived need for receiving help.

## **2. Understanding Insecurity**

For those that are keenly watching this space, there is a palpable global shift from SSA to Gender Identity/Expression issues (Transgenderism). We need to understand this shift if we are to engage with those from the LGBTQIA+ spectrum.

Unsettled questions of identity can be the most devastating for anyone. The question of "who am I?" is one of the big four that philosophers down the centuries have tried to attempt at cracking. Am I Charles? Am I a Physical Therapist/Apologet?

Am I a South Indian? Yes, I'm ALL of that - yet I am NOT any of that! I'm more. Not a mere name, with a lineage and a career, social standing or ethnicity. I'm more! So, who am I?

A false grounding of our identity and an undue emphasis or affiliation to our so-called identity markers can do us more damage in the long run. Sadly, here we see that the all-encompassing idea of identity is forced into a small facet called *sexuality* and an attempt at meaning, purpose and significance seems to be rooted in that 'fluid' framework!

Clearly all this is leading one into a bubble of insecurity. Understanding their identity challenges and where generally identity challenges stem from is crucial to engage with people straddling this spectrum.

## **3. Understanding Rejection**

All of us made in God's image, carry the wonderful capability and desire for relationality. We desire to be loved and we thrive maximally when we have the opportunity to express our love too. This is because our Maker is essentially love. The unique tri-unity in the personhood of God makes this relationality within the Godhead a reality!

The people in the LGBTQIA+ community sense a heightened level of alienation and rejection.

This is clearly hard to process amidst their ongoing quest for identity and that, in the wrong places (esp. sexuality). All this leaves them seeking for affirmation, acceptance and belonging. This has resulted in the movement that we see today - a championing-of-sorts for 'rights' and 'safe spaces' where they could be protected from suffering further hurt or rejection. Historically, there have been and there continues to be incidents of abuse, oppression, violence and ostracizing that have accentuated alienation and that have in recent years found release through - pushbacks, propaganda, protests and defiance. That should not come as a surprise to any of us. Therefore, understanding this caveat of this cultural revolution is crucial to engage with the LGBTQIA+ community.

#### 4. Understanding Fallenness

Another crucial piece in this discourse that we (both the LGBT community and the non-LGBT) so often tend to ignore is that we *all* are part of this fallen world! We are all fallen people. We all are sexually broken! We are *all* on the same large broken boat, perhaps on different decks. So, all of us primarily need *the* Saviour! This understanding is crucial in sensibly and sensitively navigating through and engaging with the LGBTQIA+

community, with *truth* and *grace*. Seeing ourselves along with them as needy recipients of grace and mercy. Needy for true identity. Needy for true restoration!

Else, we risk being perceived as Christian hypocrites poised securely on our moral high horses, screaming down at those that don't seem to realize their need for the Saviour and chasing them away from Him as far away as our hypocrisy could possibly drive them. Scary, isn't it?! To think of how our ultra-zealous 'spirituality' could be terribly misperceived by needy others.

#### 5. Understanding Role-modelling

The LGBTQIA+ community doesn't see in Christians many deep thinking, understanding, sensitive and sensible role models that they would trust to get introduced to Christ Jesus!

In the words of Christopher Yuan, a former gay and now a transformed teaching faculty at the Moody Bible Institute, "*most see Christians as anti-homosexual, not anti-homosexuality.*" This is a comment that we need to take seriously if we desire to be winsome witnesses to Christ's transforming power in their lives! Most see us as Bible-bashing bigots and would do anything to

dismiss us and stay as far away from us as possible.

## 6. Understanding Christ, the approachable!

There are several titles of Jesus that we are familiar with. One character trait of Jesus - God, is His approachability. the Samaritan woman of ill-repute at the well, the adulteress caught in the very act, the abominable who anointed His feet with her tears - were not running away from the "Holy of Holies" but were drawn to Him and His words. Words of life. Words of grace, proportioned with truth. The mysterious marriage of truth and grace that's captivating, comforting and convicting all at once! We all struggle with this, and we often get it wrong!

### C. Desire Discernment!

We are either too *gracious* or *comforting* to the extent that it borders on condoning the LGBTQIA+ lifestyle. Or we are too *truthful* and clobber people leaving them bruised and battered beyond 'redemption'!

Jesus was a champion at marrying truth and grace and so should we be! As we dig deeper into His approach a startling pattern that we've perhaps missed seems to emerge. We see that He was One Who never pulled back a punch when He had to deal with the puffed-up ones who claimed that they knew God but had no signs of it. However, when He dealt with ones that didn't have access to or knowledge of truth - the poor in spirit, those feeling 'inadequate' about themselves, He always extended grace and then seasoned it with truth, in time after triggering transformation.

We, as His disciples need to understand and discern to be effective ambassadors of Truth personified, Jesus Christ - the identity-giver, the redeemer, the restorer, the transformer, the One who makes all things new!

May God give us the understanding and discernment we need as we are presented with opportunities to engage with those from the LGBTQIA+ community.



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**Charles and Priscilla** with their daughter Mishaelle and parents from both sides make their home in Vellore. They are co-founders of "think Christ apologetics" ([www.thinkChrist.org](http://www.thinkChrist.org)), Charlie's Spine Clinic (Google and Practo listed) and Priscilla's Montessori Matters (a Montessori Training and Consultancy services) - tentmaking efforts to fund their ministry among - thinkers, seekers and skeptics.



## A Map for a Maze

Friends! I'm Ritik, just an average student on the edge of completing my B. Com (Honors) degree. When I was handed this topic, I have to admit, I felt a surge of nerves. It's not every day you dive into discussions as sensitive and complex as LGBTQIA from a biblical perspective. The funniest part is when you think about this topic you get only questions and if you have ever thought about it you know there are so many thoughts, approaches, and beliefs swirling around, it is like navigating a maze without a map!

In our modern world, it's no secret that many, especially young believers like us, feel a bit lost when it comes to responding to these issues. We're overwhelmed with questions about what it means to be a Christian in today's society, especially when it comes to topics like sexuality and gender identity. It's actually very easy to feel overwhelmed or unsure about where we stand and how to navigate these waters with grace and truth.

First, it's important to have a strong and differential understanding between **Gender Expression** and **Sexual Orientation**. Gender expression refers to how we intentionally communicate our gender through various means

such as clothing, behavior, hairstyle, and interactions. It's a deliberate expression of identity. On the other hand, Sexual Orientation is simply, who we are attracted to and desire relationships with, it includes categories like Gay, Lesbian, Straight, Bisexual, and Asexual. It's important to note that sexual orientation is different from gender identity. Gender identity relates to a deeper sense of whether one identifies as male, female, or another gender. For example, if someone is born biologically male but from inside he feels like a female, their Gender Identity is female. It's about who we are internally, not just our outward appearance.

"The biblical perspective on gender and sexuality is rooted in Genesis 1:27-28, which states, *'So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth . . . have dominion."*' This foundational passage highlights the importance of the divine intention of God behind human creation, emphasizing both the biologically unique characteristics between male and female and the foundational principles of love, marriage, fidelity, and reproduction. From a Christian worldview, these aspects are interconnected, forming a holistic understanding of gender

and sex that honors God's design for humanity."

In understanding the scriptural foundations of gender, it is essential to recognize the biblical view as binary, considering only male and female as distinct categories. The concept of Gender Identity within biblical context aligns with the organic unity of biological sex and gender, where male and female are uniquely and specifically designed to be fruitful and have children. This perspective also informs the biblical stance on homosexuality, as conveyed clearly by Paul in Romans 1:26-27, where he addresses the deviation from natural male-female sexual relations.

In the Old Testament, specifically in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:10-16, various sexual sins, including incest, adultery, bestiality, and homosexuality, are categorized together as punishable by death. The stance of Judaism regarding homosexual relations was unequivocal, deeming them as abominable acts. Notably, from Genesis to Revelation, there is no passage that condones or approves of homosexual practices within the biblical narrative.

As we are moving to the end, I just want to say that I know the Bible is very harsh and clearly against LGBTQIA practices, it even uses the word 'Death' as punishment for them. But sometimes staying open for everything that comes our way can lead us to the separation from God. And we all know that a plant without soil cannot live. The Bible teaches us very clearly to be careful. As we saw, God has a very special and divine intention behind human creation, by uniquely creating the roles of male and female in love, marriage, fidelity, and reproduction. This understanding honors God's design for humanity, rooted in the interconnectedness of biological sex and Gender Identity, while also providing clear guidance on matters such as homosexuality as articulated in Romans 1:26-27.

I hope that I was able to be clear on a few basics and help clear a few doubts and bring you back to the foundational principles of the Bible. May God be with you as you seek His guidance and wisdom on the same! Blessings to you all on this journey of faith and discovery.



**Ritik** is a student from West Delhi ICEU. He is ambitious and eager to contribute to student ministry, he loves traveling, meeting new people, and exploring new opportunities. Currently, he holds the positions of Treasurer and Follow-up Secretary in West Delhi ICEU.



## Psychiatric perspective on LGBTQIA+ How can a believer help ?

LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, intersex, asexual) have surprising statistics. 8 to 10% of people have reported some or transient same-sex attraction, though purely same-sex attracted are only 1.5 to 1.7%, and the same number with bisexuals. There are reported to be 2.5 million LGB individuals in India, and the USA has recorded 650,000 same-sex couples, 114,000 married. Transgenders are known in India as Hijras. Seen at many traffic signals, they number 3 million. Intersex (I) people are 1 in 1500-2000 live births. While these statistics are open to debate, they give some idea of the extent of this people-group.

LGBTQIA+ issues have taken centre-stage over the last few decades for a variety of reasons. Possibly various events for freedom and rights – national anti-colonial freedom movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the anti-slavery movement, international human rights declarations,

movements against caste or racial discrimination, the women's empowerment movement – all these emboldened the LGBT community to come out and demand acceptance, too.

The Christian community globally has struggled with its response to the LGBT issue, though many of the freedom movements mentioned above drew initial stimulus from the Christian perspective on human rights and equality of all humans before God. Christian faith also commits the church to help those in trouble, but scriptural passages hold the church back from acceptance of, in particular, homosexual lifestyles.

### Psychiatric perspective on LGBTQIA+

What is the cause of LGBTQIA? Is there a mental disorder causing this, as many in India believe?

Scientific studies are underway to understand the causes. Intersex can often be caused by genetic

variations or biological conditions, especially of reproductive hormones such as androgen. Studies show possible genetic markers for same-sex attraction on chromosomes 13 and 14, though they fall short of a definitive “gay gene”. Studies also show the influence of intra-uterine hormonal influences, on both subsequent gender identity as well as sexual orientation. Twin studies show that those with identical genetic structure (identical twins) have a higher rate of concordance for same-sex attraction than non-identical siblings – up to 65%. Noticeably, the concordance is not 100%, as it would be were the cause purely genetic. Studies also show increased incidence of same-sex attraction among those with a history of abuse – 8% in men, 5% in women, in some studies; but do not indicate which came first. Homosexual boys and men are often abused.

Coping with these issues has not been easy for this community. They are often rejected by their families, ridiculed (including in movies), bullied, or sexually harassed. The earlier laws marked them out as criminals, with sentence for even consenting same-sex couples being life imprisonment – while heterosexual rape, at that point, carried a sentence of only seven years. LGBTQ people can therefore

end up with persistent anxiety, depression and other mental disorders.

Two examples from India demonstrate how complicated these issues are. Santhi Soundarajan, from a simple family in Tamil Nadu won a silver medal in the 2006 Asian games. She was required to take a sex test soon after, which showed the chromosomal structure of a man (23<sup>rd</sup> pair XY). However, due to androgen insensitivity from early conception, her body developed ambiguously, and her gender identity was female. She frequently wore saris, flowers in her hair. Repeatedly stripped of her medals and not allowed to participate in athletics, she fell into depression and twice attempted suicide. She was finally given a job as a coach, and now dresses as a man, she says, in the hopes that that will make people accept her.

Duttee Chand's case is a little different. She, too, is a track and field athlete. She has hyperandrogenism, a condition where a chromosomally XX woman produces abundant testosterone in the range that is common among men. She too, was dropped from the Indian team because of this, but along with others like Olympic champion Castor Semenya, has caused the International Athletics federations

to re-examine the sports regulations on this. Duttee has also come out as same-sex attracted.

Each LGBTQIA person is different, but the conditions sometimes overlap.

**How should a Christian help a friend who claims they are LGBTQIA?**

**First, with compassion.** Listen to their story. Do not show rejection, disgust or discomfort. Remember, all our righteousness are as filthy rags in God’s sight (Is 64:6), whether us or them. Let them talk, and assure them of your love and concern, and of God’s.

**Second, with humility.** There is much we do not understand about these conditions, and their biological causations. The details above show that many of these conditions are linked and often biologically based. Many got these conditions in the womb. It is possible some became that way following abuse, but it is still not something they chose. Most of them resist for years and it is often after much tears, bewilderment and sorrow that they may talk about it. So, listen with humility. Do not immediately jump to tell them they are sinning by being different in their body hormones, or genes, if they are not sure of their gender, or if they feel attracted to the same sex. We

often don’t know everything about these issues. Santhi Soundarajan for instance could not be blamed for anything that happened to her.

**Third, be clear about the finer distinctions between the various LGBTQIA issues.**

This is important because while these have been clubbed together, the Bible has condemnatory passages only on same-sex *activity*. It accepts matter-of-factly and does not condemn those born intersex, through genetic or hormonal changes (Jesus’ own words on “some born eunuchs”, Mt 19:12). It does not condemn those who do not have a stable gender identity. It doesn’t condemn same-sex orientation, if not acted on: that is, those who remain chaste and single.

It does however, condemn homosexual activity; so if a friend tells you they are gay and want to live an active homosexual lifestyle, pray and ask God to give you the wisdom to gently talk with them about it. Rather than simply denouncing them as sinful, suggest you study the biblical passages about sexuality together. Take the help of elders or other resources. They will probably come out with counter-arguments, or be angry with God, or the church. Listen respectfully, and patiently, and respond as the Lord leads you to. Ultimately, this is a decision



they have to take, and it is one that will affect their whole life and discipleship. You can help best by being a loving friend ready to talk, listen and pray with them. Get them expert help if they are depressed or suicidal.

LGBTQIA issues are complex, distressing many people. Studies so far show several possible social, biological and genetic causes. People within this group are often prone to social rejection, injustice

and violence of different kinds and often have periods of anxiety, depression and other mental disorders. To help them, we need to listen humbly, assuring them of God's love, and ours, and not be quick to condemn or reject them. We, and they, need to understand through discussion, prayer and Bible study what cannot be controlled (biology, genes, hormones or orientation) and what can (acting on the attraction). May God help us to reflect Christ to all in this group.



*Dr. Jamila Koshy was an EU student in the late 70s and early 80s; doctor and psychiatrist for almost 40 years; currently, a graduate in Bengaluru; contact : jamilakoshy@yahoo.com*

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## UESI Stand on LGBTQ & Sexual Activities Outside Marriage

### Background:

- In the present scenario, we see sensitive topic such as sexuality in discussion around us. Under these circumstances, we need to make our stand clear regarding LGBTQ (L-lesbian, G- gay, B- bisexual, T- transgender, Q-queer), homosexuals and any other sexual activity outside of marriage based on scripture.
- In December 2013, the Supreme Court of India had ruled that Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code - which makes "carnal intercourse against the order of nature" punishable with life imprisonment - was constitutionally valid. In doing so, it had overturned a 2009 Delhi High Court judgment which had ruled that criminalizing consensual same-sex relationships was discriminatory and violated constitutional rights to equality, privacy and dignity.
- A member of Parliament of India (in Dec 2015) was of the view that the sexual preferences, sexuality and partner should be an individual's choice and not to be controlled nor monitored by the State (Government Law Enforcement Agencies). He introduced a *Private Member's Bill in the Parliament of India* seeking to repeal portion of the Section 377 of CrPC of India, but the bill was defeated. He soon started a petition through [www.change.org](http://www.change.org) to gar-

ner public support for this cause and many thousands responded to *support the petition* in a short span of time. Consequently, the Supreme Court of India repealed part of the Section 377 of Indian Penal Code that deals with unnatural but consensual sexual intercourse between people of same gender. With this, any consensual sex between adults is legal and no boundaries set.

- Some of the Staff and Graduate Leaders from UESI had signed the online petition in support of the legal rights to decriminalize consensual sex from same gender. However, the petition demanded decriminalization not merely to prevent harassment, but because it wants people to have the right to make choices of their own sexuality without interference from the state. It contends that punishing homosexuality is not consistent with modern values. *Thus, all who signed the petition were in fact publicly deviating from the Biblical stand that UESI believes in.*
- This signing of the petition was brought to the notice of the UESI Board in 2016 followed by a repeat reminder in March 2019 during a Consultation on Staff Matters at New Delhi. *The concern expressed was as follows:*

*"The Bible makes a clear distinction between the sin and the sinner. God hates sin so much, that he punishes the sinner with eternal death. But*





*He loves sinners so much, that He gave His own life for them and offered forgiveness to the repentant. His dying for sinners does not condone sin, but demonstrates its consequences, for He substituted the repentant sinners on the Cross. So also, our love for those who are involved in any sinful sexual practice must not and cannot include any sort of justification or freedom for that practice. It must always elicit the terrible consequences of their sin and our love towards them to help them come out of the sin in addition to pointing to them to surrender their lives to Jesus."*

- UESI Board appointed a sub-committee to publish a paper on UESI Stand on Homosexuality and any other sexual activity outside marriage. The Board decided to discard the paper prepared by the sub-committee in the review stage based on feedback of senior members of UESI and by the UESI Board. Then, the UESI Board re-wrote a 3-paragraph paper which was circulated for feedback to the states. The UESI Board considered the feedback received and presented a final draft of the paper to the AGM 2021.

**UESI AGM 2021 unanimously approved the following:**

- UESI does not approve of the petition started by Mr. Sashi Tharoor and the act of signing-up in support of this petition by some of the members of UESI.
- **UESI's stand** on this matter is outlined below:

**1) Our approach towards society on above issues:**

In all forums where these issues are discussed or debated, we must categorically mention that all homosexual and bisexual practices (Lev. 18:26-30; Romans 1:26-27) like any other sexual activity outside heterosexual (male- female) human marriage are sin and abominable in the eyes of God as mentioned in the Bible and cannot be condoned. We as believers should stand for promoting the biblical values in this matter without any compromise. UESI should intentionally and proactively seek to engage, minister and provide biblical answers.

**2) Our approach towards individuals or groups involved or affected by such practices:**

We cannot condone or approve (Romans 1: 32) their practices and actions or their explanations based on any factors, yet make attempts whenever possible, to lead them with sensitivity to the love, grace and forgiveness of our Lord Jesus Christ (John 8:10-11, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11). Any attempt to share the gospel and express God's love with such individuals or groups should not be treated /considered as approval of their actions at any cost. While it is right to accept such individuals as they are, for the purpose of conveying God's love to them, it must not give an impression, either to the people who practice or to their supporters, that we are affirming their beliefs and practices.

**- Contd. on. Pg. 34**

# Suggestions for Contemporary Discourse on LGBTQIA++ with Empathy and Understanding



Traditionally a discourse was perceived to be an intense debate or exchange of ideas on a subject. Several college campuses in the past had debates on contemporary topics and issues influencing students. However, in today's world, discourse primarily seems to happen through close-knit relationships and social media. The abolition of Section 377 in the last decade has contributed significantly to embracing equality, diversity, and inclusion. Social media influencers have been quick to make reels and normalize acceptance of all preferences. Campaigns such as "Love is love" have gained strategic popularity. Responses to these need to be short and articulate on the same forums. In this context how we can have a meaningful dialogue conversing about these issues is something

we need to think through. Here are some suggestions for us to consider:

## 1. Build authentic relationships

– Having a discourse or dialogue in the context of authentic and transparent friendships matters, especially for Gen Z. It's important to have friendships where a healthy exchange of thoughts, ideas, and disagreements can take place in a "safe environment" without fear of judgment. Reducing these relationships or discussions primarily as an "evangelistic project" needs to be avoided. Building relationships takes intentional time and effort, especially with those who identify as being part of the LGBTQ+ community. It requires us to look beyond their orientation and behaviour, and to know them more personally.

## 2. Overcome fear of interaction

– Jesus is our example. The way He interacted and made intentional conversation with those whom others would avoid was counter-cultural. He genuinely sought to know them, gently probed them, and challenged their understanding. We need to ask Him for wisdom in ensuring we have meaningful conversations. Though we may not have adequate

knowledge of the people with whom we wish to share the gospel, communication and dialogue is an essential part of the process.

**3. View people as multidimensional** - Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman in John 4 has much we can learn from. It was intentional and thought-provoking. The interaction has an amazing tension of grace and truth. He did not try to fix her immediately but probed her and enabled her to face the reality that what she was pursuing was not going to ultimately satisfy her. He never gave up on the person nor compromised with His convictions. We need to follow this example and minister to others holistically. While we cannot be certain how to respond in each situation, the Spirit of God guides us. While we may not have all the answers or be able to articulate everything perfectly, we can empathetically seek to understand.

**4. Bear witness to the fullness of God's truth for sexuality** - we must understand God's design for sexuality and how a world under sin has distorted it. While verses from scripture that focus on homosexuality could be used as a starting point for discussion and not condemnation, aspects such as why this is "unnatural" from a creation perspective and how the practice

of homosexuality was prevalent even in the New Testament period causing Paul to make specific mentions of it, highlights the fact that as created beings we need to exercise stewardship of our sexual desires aligned with God's plans for our lives. Instead of singling homosexuality out, we need to address the full breadth of sexual sin and brokenness. We live in a fallen world, and all of us bear wounds and scars. Pornography, divorce, and even heterosexual sex outside of marriage proportionally affect us. When others see that even we repent individually and as a church for all the ways we've fallen short in these areas and walk together toward submission to God's will, with humility and openness about our failings and struggles it paves the way for others to be open and transparent about their lives as well. The admonition of sinners is also a work of mercy highlighting the need for God's grace.

**5. Challenge the notions of identity** - articulating the aspect of finding freedom through Christ and how embracing the identity God gives is liberating should be an integral part of the discourse. We could speak about contemporary living examples of those who have had same-sex attractions without choosing to act on them and embraced the new identity

found in Christ. Their testimonies bear witness to the fact that there is greater meaning and satisfaction in knowing Christ than just acting on their inclinations, i.e. their main identity is no longer defined by their sexual orientation but by God, the One Who created them. This view challenges the norms of LGBTQ+ as the primary identity is drawn from who they perceive themselves to be based on how they feel and not just how they behave.

**6. Unpack the current trends and beliefs** - Tag lines such as “You do you”, “Love is love”, and “My body, my choice” are all framed to pander to the self over anything else. When we get to define what love is, our feelings become God, defining what we should do. Does God define love, or do I? Is God love, or are my feelings my God? It can’t be both. These need to be countered with the truth of how God defines love and why God chose to have moral safeguards. The Bible anchors love in the moral law of God. We need to look at every aspect of life within the grand story of creation, humans made in the image of God, falling with the imputation of Adam’s sin, requiring the sacrifice of Christ for rescue and ransom, and living in Him as victors over sin and ambassadors of God’s call to all to repent and believe. When we fail to do this, the only relevance and

place left for religion is the view that says Jesus is welcome to bless and affirm, but not to judge or to ransom.

**7. Follow good online etiquette** – given today’s trends while we may also need to choose to counter or converse online with those with divergent views, we need to ensure we tread softly with gentleness and compassion. We need not boast or brag about the views we hold onto but we can empathize and lament about everything wrong in the world. It’s good to be conscious of our failings and truthful and honest about them. We must also be courageous in standing up for what is true. We must not end up winning the argument but losing the person.

**8. Sharing what it has meant for us to know and follow Christ** – sharing our testimony should be more than sharing how we came to know Christ and believed in Him for our salvation. The truth that we are living out our life for Christ means denying ourselves, taking up our cross and following our Lord—including sacrificing romantic dreams and sexual desires when they are calling us away from Him is something that we need to articulate. Also, the fact that we are not perfect and we are not meant to live out our lives in isolation.

Whatever our patterns of attraction and temptation, we're meant to need each other, confessing, and growing together in the community.

These are some general principles that we can follow both in our personal interactions as well as a collective strategy in having meaningful dialogue with the LGBTQ+ community. We should

avoid shying away from interaction or taking the moral high stand, looking down on those who identify as part of this community. All of us are sinners who need God's mercy and since we have experienced God's grace, we should extend that in all our conversations and interactions, depending on God through much prayer, being led by His Spirit.



**Prabhu Dhanaraj** hails from Mysore and involved with UESI since 1997. After completing his M.Tech in Information Technology, he has worked in the corporate IT sector. He served as the Executive Secretary of UESI K and is now part of UESI National Communication & Networking Department as Graduate Secretary. He resides in Bangalore along with his wife, Deborah who is a special educator. Interests include gardening, apologetics, teaching, and counselling. He can be reached at [psdmysore@gmail.com](mailto:psdmysore@gmail.com)

## UESI Stand on LGBTQ & Sexual Activities Outside Marriage

- *Contd. frm. Pg. 30*

### 3) Our expectations from UESI Members:

It is mandatory that all members subscribe to the doctrinal basis of UESI that the scripture has the supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

UESI expects all its members to stand for the historical biblical truths and raise a strong testimony while participating in public forums/social platforms related to these issues. If there is no scope for adequately expressing biblical stand on these matters, UESI dis-

courages its members from participating in such forums or to endorse any issue that is contra-venous to our stand.

If any individual member of the UESI Constituency holds or expresses views not in line with the above stand, the organization has the right to counsel and correct on a one-to-one basis. Any such member will be given the option to either abide by the UESI stand or to opt for withdrawal from the UESI membership, else UESI reserves the right to disqualify such persons from its membership or terminate such people from employment.

## Readers' Response

Dear CL readers, we would like to get your feedback about CL. We are listening to you. If you liked/disliked the issue, please mail us at [campus.link@uesi.in](mailto:campus.link@uesi.in), so that we can improve the magazine.

## Readers feedback on Mar - Apr 2024 "Artificial Intelligence and Bible"

### Valuable Insights on AI

The article "Exploring Artificial Intelligence with a Christian Worldview" provides a thorough overview of AI and its distinctions from human intelligence, prompting us to marvel at the greatness of God's infinite wisdom in creating human minds. Each article in the issue offers valuable insights into the impact of AI technology and emphasizes the importance of adaptation in education. May God bless the commendable efforts of the Campus Link team in delivering such informative content.

**Elsy Thomas, Kochi, Kerala**

### Contemporary Topic

A contemporary topic has been covered. It had people from various walks of life. There was a practical article by James Sebastian. Dr Philemon's concluding remark, "Before AI becomes

another Babel tower moment, let the godly men get into action," hit me hard. Davis abraham theoenglish was a smart plugin for his own work connecting with AI.

**Binu Thomas, Rothak, Haryana**

### Balanced Articles

The cartoon is a little ambiguous, the text description under it could be misconstrued - to mean that we'll depend on AI/Bots to lead Bible studies for us in the future and we'll uncritically trust and learn from it! But I don't think that's the intent of the Cartoonist. The text descriptors underneath, give that impression, though. But other than that nothing off. Most of the articles are quite balanced. Perhaps one, or two seem a little 'alarmist' about AI, needlessly.

**A reader.**

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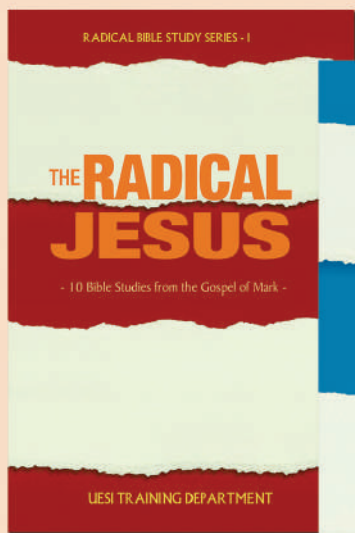
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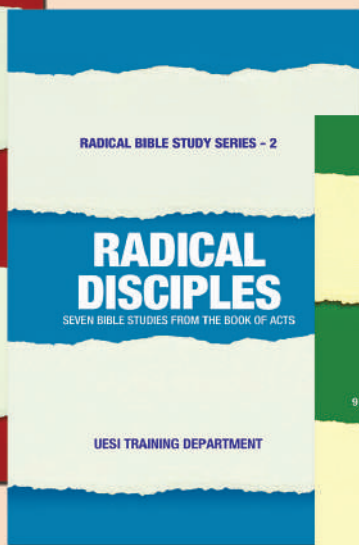
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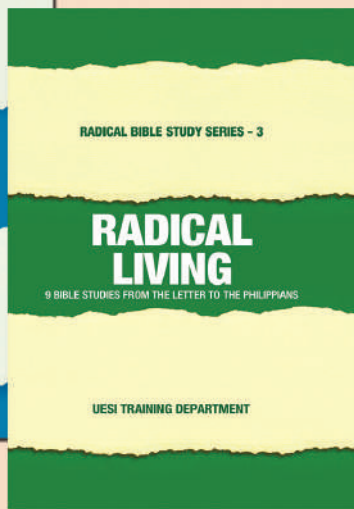




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