

NCCI – CJPC, SCEPTRE, CISRS and SCMI

THEOLOGICAL ROUND TABLE ON HUMAN SEXUALITY

5TH - 6TH DEC. 2009, KOLKATA

MESSAGE TO THE INDIAN CHRISTIANITY

We the participants of the Theological Round Table on Human Sexuality jointly organized by National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) – CJPC, SCEPTRE (an extension programme of the Senate of Serampore College), Christian Institute for Study of Religion and Society, and Student Christian Movement of India, who are engaged in different ministries in Church and Society as Bishops, Church Leaders, Theological Educators, Research Scholars, Professional Counselors, Lawyers, and Activists, with different sexual orientations, after several brainstorming discussions and sessions on Biblical, Theological, Ministerial, Ecclesiastical and Legal perspectives, resolve to send the following message on Human Sexuality to the Indian Christian community in India in general, and to the NCCI and the member churches, regional councils, theological institutions, Christian organizations, and our ecumenical partners in particular.

We affirm that **sexuality is a divine gift**, and hence God intends us to **celebrate** this divine gift in committed, consensual, and monogamous **relationships**. It is in such celebrations of our sexuality that we grow into the **fullness of our humanity**, and **experience God** in a **special way**.

We believe that our negative attitudes towards sexuality and our body-denying spirituality stem from our distorted understanding of **God's purpose** for us. **The embodied God who embraced flesh in Jesus Christ is the ground for us to love our bodies** and to **celebrate life**. So God invites us to experience sexual fulfillment in our **committed relationships** of **justice-love** with the **commitment to be vulnerable, compassionate, and responsible**.

We recognize that **there are people with different sexual orientations**, and we believe that this **diversity is a divine gift**. The very faith affirmation that the whole human community is created in **the image of God** irrespective of our sexual orientations makes it imperative on us to reject systemic and personal attitudes of homophobia and discrimination against sexual minorities. We consider the **Delhi High Court verdict** to decriminalize homosexuality as a **positive step** in that direction.

We **welcome the judgment's commitment** to affirm **inclusivity** and to read down legal codes that deny **the fundamental constitutional rights of sexual minorities**.

We believe that the **Church as 'Just and Inclusive Community'** is duty bound to become a **community without walls** to reach out to people who are stigmatized and demonized and **be a listening community** to understand their pains, desires, and hopes.

We **envision Church** as a **sanctuary to the ostracized** who thirst for **understanding, friendship, love, compassion and solidarity**.

We invite the Christian community in India to become a Church to people with different sexual orientations, and be **part of their struggles to live** out their God given lives.

We appeal the **Church to sojourn** with sexual minorities and their families **without prejudice and discrimination**, to **provide them ministries of love, compassionate, and justice.**

We request NCCI and the churches in India to initiate an in-depth **theological study on Human Sexuality for better discernment of God's purpose for us.** This involves a deeper engagement with Bible, traditions, and other disciplines such as social theories, psychology, and medical science. This process should be an **inclusive** one where people with different sexual orientations can **learn from each other** and **contribute** to this process **without prejudice and fear.**

We also request the Theological Fraternities in India to help this process through **integrating issues related to Human Sexuality into the process of theological and ministerial formation.**

We hope and pray that the **embodied God** will bless our endeavors to grow **into the fullness of life, and to transform our faith communities into rainbow communities of the beloved and equals.**

The Participants
Theological Roundtable on 'Human Sexuality'
6th Dec. 2009
