Training Manual:
Gender Equality Theology

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The goal of this manual is to enable workshop facilitators to deliver in a systematic and methodical manner the theological and bible study resources on God's Vision for Human Relationships.

1. Introduction to this Guide

This guide is grounded in experiences of Gender Equality Theology training that has been run in Fiji and Vanuatu. Delivered in March and September 2016, these trainings were organised and supported by local church partners and targeted key church leaders and Christian Educators. In both cases, training was facilitated by Rev Dr Cliff Bird and Siera Bird.

The following modules are designed to equip you to run Gender Equality Theology training for the church leaders and congregation members in your local area.

One foundational element of the Gender Equality Theology training is the framework paper titled *Human Dignity and Gender Equality from a Biblical-Theological Perspective*. This paper is included as an Appendix to this Manual and provides an important foundation for both facilitators of, and participants in, Gender Equality Theology training. [A copy of this framework paper should be distributed to any participants in the training.]

Other key resources are Rev Dr Cliff Bird's academic paper on *The Theology of Human Rights and Responsibilities*, and the six-volume Bible study series that discuss *God's Vision for Human Relationships.* It is important to be familiar with these resources before delivering any training. Each of these resources are discussed throughout the guide, which provides suggestions and helpful tips for facilitators.

Given the theological nature of the resources, and the importance of faith in the Pacific context, trainings have featured devotions each morning, run either by the event organisers and facilitators, or participants who are attending the training. This can be a useful way to engage participants and allows the training to be more firmly rooted in the local context. It is also an opportunity to observe how participants are assimilating gender equality theology into their understanding.

Note that the two sessions "Human Rights and Gender Theology" and "Textual and Contextual Mapping" are not part of the *God's Vision for Human Relationships* bible study resources booklet. These two are included in this training manual as important leads into the bible studies.

2. Preparing to Facilitate Gender Equality Theology Training

2.1. Things to consider when planning

Here are some things to consider when you are planning the Gender Equality Theology Training workshop.

Inviting the right people

- The people you invite to the training will depend upon what you hope to achieve.
- An equal number of women and men should be invited to participate, unless the training is specifically for male church leaders.
- Think about whether the people you have invited will feel comfortable talking with one another. Will the women feel confident sharing their opinions if village chiefs and elders are present? Will laypeople feel confident asking questions if ministers are present? This does not mean you can't invite these people, but consider how you might make each participant feel comfortable.
- Also consider how you might foster an environment of openness and equality when delivering the training. Keep the group in mind as you facilitate the training – Do typically underrepresented groups (such as persons with disabilities, young people or women) feel free to contribute? Are women contributing equally to men? Some groups may need more encouragement to speak up than others. A useful tool is the 'Learning Agreement' in the next session.
- Lastly but not least, where training includes clergy, the spouse (husband/wife) of the clergy must be invited and encouraged to attend as well.

Choosing a venue and setting up the room

The choice of venue and setting will dictate how engaged participants are in the training. **The room should be set up before participants arrive.**

- It is important that participants can discuss with each other in this training. There is a lot of material delivered by a key facilitator, however participants will understand the material best when they can debate and ask questions.
- So, it is important to choose a venue and set the room up so that participants can:
    - See and hear the facilitator
    - See and hear each other
    - Feel comfortable to share
    - Access the room if they have a disability
- Here are some things to consider:
    - Will a PA system be needed so that facilitator(s) and participants are able to speak and hear easily?
    - Should participants be seated in a U shape, or in table groups? What will allow them to discuss more easily, while not being distracted by others in the room?
    - Can participants see the facilitator? Is the facilitator placed on a stage?

        - Sometime if the facilitator is on a stage, it can create a sense of superiority or inequality between the facilitators and participants. Alternatively, it can ensure that participants can see the facilitator wherever they are. You need to decide what is best.
    - Are there spaces where participants can go to complete group work?
    - Can all participants access the building? Would it be suitable for someone in a wheelchair? (Including the toilet and kitchen facilities?)
    - Is there a projector or a screen? Can all participants see it?

All of these practical considerations will change how effective the training is.

Choosing Activities

- Ensure that you are familiar with all the theological material. Participants will ask you questions so it is important that you have a good understanding of the material.
- Look through the guide and think about your context and audience. The activities in this guide are designed to be useful. They have been used in Gender Equality Theology training before. However, if there is a better activity to illustrate a particular point in your context, do what you think is best.
- Please insert any of your own ideas for ice breakers or energisers. There are some suggestions in section 5 and these can be used at any time in the training. However, aside from these activities, your exercises and activities should always link to the learning objectives listed for that session.

General Facilitation Tips

- Stories and anecdotes play an important part of facilitating this material. They provide examples that are easy for participants to relate to.
- It is important that the facilitator gives space to the participants to answer, discuss and debate. However, wherever this is provided, clarification and feedback on these comments is necessary, for the sake of maintaining the theological integrity of the material.

Documenting and Evaluating the Training

- It is a good idea for someone to observe the training and make some notes along the way. It is best for this note taker to have no facilitating roles. This will free them to focus on what the facilitator is emphasising, and how participants are responding to the content.
- The facilitator can reflect and make notes too. However, it will be difficult for them to pay attention to what is working well and what is not working well at the same time as concentrating on delivering the material. It takes pressure off the facilitator if someone else is there to take notes and make observations.
- To help the rapporteur with documenting a small recorder will be useful.
- At the end of each day, it is important for facilitators and organisers of the workshop to meet together and de-brief. This is important even if there is only one facilitator delivering the training. Having de-briefing time will allow the facilitator and organisers to reflect on the day's progress and if necessary, change their approach to be more effective. A useful way to gauge

learning outcomes from participants is to ask 1-2 participants to be present during these de-brief sessions.

- At the end of the training, collate all the note taker's observations, and whatever material has been produced by the group. It is particularly important to ensure that any resolutions or plans made by the group have been noted down in one place.
- It is important to incorporate at least one evaluation activity that participants are directly involved in. It is preferable to have an evaluation activity part way through the training. This will allow the facilitator to adjust their approach and emphasise particular elements of the training according to feedback received throughout the week. It is also useful to conduct an evaluation activity at the end of the workshop. Suggestions for these activities can be found in the 'Evaluation and Feedback Activities' section of this manual.

2.2. Resources

Here is a list of resources that you will need to facilitate the training:

- All participants receive a folder containing:
  - Note-taking supplies (pen, notepaper etc)
  - One copy of:
    - *God's Vision for Human Relationships*
    - *Framework Paper on Human Dignity*
    - The Bible
  - Workshop program
  - Copy of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
  - Copy of the paper *Universal Declaration on Human Responsibilities*
  - Copy of the paper by Rev Dr. Cliff Bird, *Human Rights and Christian Theology: A View from Oceania*.
- Facilitation resources

Resource:	Use for:
Butchers paper	Group work
Blu Tac, scissors, masking tape etc	Pin up participants group work on the wall
Markers (whiteboard)	Group Work Writing on the whiteboard
White board/chalkboard	Facilitator notes and illustrations
Post-it notes	Evaluation Activities Group work
Laptop and projector (Optional)	
Microphone	*Only necessary when participants cannot hear each other or the facilitator*
Camera	*Documenting the workshop*
Printed resources i.e. ▪ Church gender statement (for group work) ▪ National gender or child protection documents (if covered in the program) ▪ Any activity sheets planned in the program ▪ Textualmapping bible study sheets	*Group work or discussion*

You may need other resources for the particular activities that you have planned. Create a list of these resources prior to the workshop and ensure that everything is in place before you begin. Ensure that you have looked through each of the activities before you begin to facilitate them.

3. Workshop Content

3.1. Introductory Sessions

Introductory sessions aim to help participants:

- Feel familiar with each other
- Understand that their ideas and active participation are valuable
- Create a set of guidelines or a shared understanding of how participants will interact with each other during the training
- Reflect on their current understanding of gender
- Have a clearer understanding of what they can expect in the training
- Understand who will be facilitating and leading the training

Facilitator tips:

- This session helps you to understanding of participants' current level of knowledge and their attitudes and practice in relation to gender. You can then adapt what you present in light of this.
- Ensure the group knows where to seek support in case of distress and understands ways in which to ask sensitive questions.

Suggested Activities:

1. Introductions (30-40 minutes)

Aim: Participants and facilitators feel more familiar with each other

Process: Facilitate participants introducing themselves or each other.

Introductions could be done in various ways. Two common ways are for each participant to introduce her/himself or each participant to introduce another. If you select the latter you will need questions to help each participant introduce their new friend. Basic questions include:

- What is your name?
- What is your background?
- Why are you involved in this workshop?
- What is the best learning experience you have ever had?
- What do you hope to learn from this workshop?
- Do you have previous experience in the subject matter of this workshop?

Note: Facilitators can think of other creative ways for participants to introduce themselves.

2. Program and Resources (15 minutes)

Aim: Participants have a clearer understanding of what they can expect in the training
Participants understand who will be facilitating and leading the training

Process: The lead facilitator can direct participants to their participant pack, including the program and theological resources, and other relevant documents. It is helpful to

suggest participants read the material preferably a day before, so that they can ask questions during the relevant session time. This applies to all relevant documents which will be used in the presentation sessions and also the activity sessions.

Participants can be invited to ask questions about the training and facilitation at this stage.

3. Hopes, Expectations and Fears (1-2 hours)

This activity should be done very early in the training to gather initial impressions and hopes of participants, before too much content has been covered.

Aims: Participants reflect on and record their current understanding of gender, and their hopes and fears associated with receiving Gender Equality Theology (GET) training. Facilitators understand the participants' current understanding of gender.

Set up:

- The facilitator distributes four post-it notes to each participant. Different coloured post-it notes can be used to differentiate between different groups i.e. women receive yellow post-it notes, men receive blue post-it notes, youth receive pink post-it notes. *This allows facilitators to understand how the perceptions of women, men and youth may differ in these activities.* You can choose which groups will be most useful to differentiate between.
- Set up three pieces of butchers paper marked "Gender", "Hopes and Expectations" and "Fears and Concerns" and place them on the wall so all participants can see them.
- It is helpful to have a support person on hand to summarise the responses that are offered by participants throughout the exercise.

Process: This activity is facilitated in several steps.

Introduction: The facilitator explains that it is helpful for us to **examine our current understandings of gender**, and make a note of what we hope to get out of this training. They explain that this will be helpful both for the facilitators and for the participants themselves, so that they can reflect more easily on their learning at the end of the training.

1. The facilitator explains that first we will explore what 'gender' means in this context. They ask participants to reflect on, "What does 'gender' mean to you?"
2. The facilitator asks participants to write their response onto their first post-it note and place it onto the butchers paper marked "Gender" (10 minutes)
3. The facilitator explains that it is helpful to examine our hopes and expectations of the GET training. Ask, "What are you hoping to take away from this training? What are you expecting to learn or discuss"?
4. The facilitator asks participants to write their response onto their second two post-it notes (One "hope" and one "expectation") and place it onto the butchers paper marked "Hopes and Expectations". *While participants are completing their responses, the facilitator or a support person can summarise responses from the previous question.*

5. The facilitator explains that it is helpful for us to be realistic about the fears and worries that might come with talking about gender in the church. The facilitator asks, "What are you fearful of when discussing gender or attending this workshop?
6. The facilitator asks participants to write their response onto their last post-it note and place it onto the butchers paper marked "Fears". *While participants are completing their responses, the facilitator or a support person can summarise responses from the previous question.*
7. The facilitator reads out some of the most representative responses offered by participants, and encourages participants to look over the butchers paper throughout the week.

The butchers paper should stay in a visible place throughout the workshop.

4. Creating a learning agreement (15-20 minutes)

Aims: Participants understand that the training is a safe space for sharing and discussion.
Participants agree on rules and boundaries for the training, so that everyone feels safe and supported.

Duration: 15 minutes

Set Up/Resources: The facilitator can record participant responses on a piece of butchers paper, placed where all participants can see it.

Process:

1. The facilitator communicates that the subjects and issues being discussed during training can be difficult or challenging, so it is important that everyone agrees on rules and boundaries, so that everyone feels safe and supported.
2. The facilitator shares something like: *"You may all come from different church communities, different roles – but for this time, even if you are an important person in your community, we're on a journey. We need to respect each other"*
3. Ask the group to suggest some rules or guidelines that will ensure the training is a safe space and that everyone is respected. The facilitator or a support person writes these onto the butchers' paper as they are suggested.
   If it is easier, participants can brainstorm in groups before presenting their ideas back to the group.
4. Give the group a chance to add anything else they think is important.

The butcher's paper should remain somewhere visible for the rest of the training, so that facilitators and participants can refer to it.

Some suggested rules could be:

- *Phone calls must be answered outside of the room*
- *Every contribution is valuable*
- *The timing of the program should be respected*
- *Help each other learn*
- *Talk about questions and differences openly*

3.2. Biblical Analysis 1: Human Rights and Gender Theology

3.2.1. Presentation

Aims:	Participants understand the theological bases of human rights and dignities
Duration:	1 hour
Preparation:	Read and prepare the presentation/study: *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and *Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities* and *Human Rights and Christian Theology: A View from Oceania.*
Set up/Resources:	A projector, if necessary for the facilitator Ensure all participants have a copy of the above documents, namely: *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, *Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities* and *Human Rights and Christian Theology: A View from Oceania* by Rev Dr Cliff Bird.
Process:	The facilitator presents *Human Rights and Responsibilities and Theology* as a bringing together or synthesis of the document above. (The facilitator could use the PowerPoint presentation provided, or adapt it to suit the context and audience. The same PowerPoint presentation is included in this manual as Appendix 1.) .

Session content and emphasis:

- This session is the foundation for the rest of the week's training. It uses content from the presentation "*Human Rights and Responsibilities and Theology.*"
- Emphasise that human rights can be a difficult and foreign concept in many cultures. Yet, they are inescapable – they seem to be the foundation of many treaties and agreements.
- The facilitator can say "The goal for me today is to connect human rights and responsibilities with theology"
- Human rights are the rights you have simply because you are human. And being human is the ultimate gift from God and, therefore, is both human rights and birth rights.
- The ultimate goal of human rights declarations is for the protection, safety and welfare of all people, especially those deemed by society to be less important including especially women, children, persons with disabilities, elderly people, persons who have intellectual disabilities, and so on.
- The above goal of human rights strongly connects with our Judaeo-Christian heritage as evidenced both in God's concern for all such people in the Old Testament and as revealed by/in Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

Tips for facilitation:

- Use PowerPoint presentation provided or adapt to suit context and audience.
- Read the necessary resources well before each session.
- Show enthusiasm on the topic.
- Be ready to "think on your feet".
- Keep eye contact and watch body language to sense tiredness, diminishing concentration, etc.
- Encourage and facilitate questions and comments from the floor.

Common questions/comments to be prepared for:

- Human rights are secular, unchristian, evil, etc.
- "*Convention on the Rights of a Child*" is not biblical as the bible says "Spare the rod, spoil the child."
- Issue of homosexuality – gays, lesbian, transgender, same sex marriage.

3.2.2. Activities

Activity Option 1: Biblical Texts and Articles on Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Aims: Participants explore the linkages between bible passages and Human Rights documents (i.e. UN conventions and articles).

Duration: 1 hour

Preparation: This activity directly follows the Human Rights and Theology presentation.

Set up/Resources: Pieces of butchers paper and pens for each small group

Process:

1. The facilitator explains that participants now have a chance to explore the biblical roots and foundations of human rights more closely.
2. Participants are broken into groups of 4-5 people and allocated passages to focus on during the group exercise. The facilitator briefly explains what the worksheet involves and instructs participants to record their responses on the butchers paper, to report back to the wider group.
3. Facilitator leaves 20-30 minutes for participants to discuss in their groups.
4. Each small group presents their discussion to the wider group

Activity Instructions:

- Read the 2 biblical texts below and then read the 4 Articles taken from the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

Biblical Texts

Exodus 3:7ff – the LORD said, "*I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land ...*"

Psalm 82:3 – God spoke through the Psalmist's conscience: *"Give justice to the weak and the fatherless [and motherless]; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute."*

Articles from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 3

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6
Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

- What are God's concerns in the first text (Ex. 3:7ff)?
- What has God done to address these concerns?
- Can you see these concerns being highlighted in the Articles? How?
- Who are the subjects of God's concern in the second text (Ps 82:3)? What were/are the Israelites exhorted to do with these subjects?
- Can you see this concern being addressed in the Articles? How?
- In summary, from the 2 biblical texts and the 4 Articles, what could you say about the linkages between the biblical texts and the Articles?
- How should these linkages between biblical texts and Articles help and guide your church's policies and strategies on rooting human rights in church doctrine and practice?

Activity Option 2: Biblical Texts and Articles on Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities

Aims: To help participants make the connection between human responsibilities and relevant biblical texts

Duration: 1 hour

Preparation: This activity directly follows the Human Rights and Theology presentation

Set up/Resources: Pieces of butchers paper and pens for each small group

Process:

1. Divide into groups of 4-5. *(Note: if there are more than 4 groups the facilitator(s) can identify relevant biblical texts and Articles.)*
2. Each group is assigned a set of biblical texts which you are required to read alongside a set of Articles in the *Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities*.

Group 1: Read Exodus 23:1-9 & Matthew 15:21-28. Read Articles 1, 5, and 9 in the *Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities* (see Appendix 10).**Group 2:** Read Amos 5:6-7, 12-15, 23-24 & John 8:1-8. Read Articles 2, 12 & 17 in the *Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities* (see Appendix 10).

Group 3: Read Proverbs 14:31 & Luke 4:18-19. Read Articles 3, 4 & 11 in the *Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities* (see Appendix 10).

Group 4: Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9 & Mark 9:37, 10:14-15. Read Articles 18, 19 & 20 in the *Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities* (see Appendix 10).

All Groups:

- Compare the biblical texts and the Articles.

- What are God's people expected to do according to the texts? Or what the "human responsibilities" expected of them/us?
- What do these biblically-based human responsibilities have in common with the Articles in the *Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities*?
- What connections can you draw from relevant biblical texts and Articles?
- How should this realisation of the linkages between biblical texts and human responsibilities help and guide your church's policies and strategies?

Essential Activity

It is important that the facilitator summarises what has been covered both in the presentation session, and key points raised in the group work. This allows for questions or comments to be responded to. It also ensures that where participants may have shared points that needed correction or clarification, this is possible. This need only take 5-10 minutes and will finish the segment on Human rights and responsibilities.

3.3. Biblical Analysis 2: Approaching the Bible - Textual and Contextual mapping

3.3.1. Presentation

Aims:	Firstly, to introduce a tool which can help participants read a biblical text in a way that helps them to look at the text in a new way and with "new" lenses. Secondly, to help participants understand a new way of approaching and interpreting biblical texts as laid out in the bible study resources.
Duration:	1 hour
Preparation:	Read and prepare the presentation/study: "Approaching the Bible: Textual and Contextual Mapping."
Set up/Resources:	A projector, if necessary for the facilitator – *this is helpful in displaying the relevant bible passage.* Whiteboard and whiteboard markers. Ensure all participants have a copy of the Bible.
Process:	The facilitator takes a biblical text and demonstrates how to apply textual mapping techniques to it. The facilitator can choose to use the PowerPoint presentation or adapt it to suit context and audience. (*The same PowerPoint is included in this manual as Appendix 2*.) Note that the text used here (John 8:1-11) is just an example of how the tool is used. The tool could be used with any text in the bible.

Session content and emphasis:

- The facilitator stresses the importance of this tool as a resource to approaching the bible in general, but also as a way to help go through the bible study resources.
- Many times the bible is used as a tool of oppression and suppression. For instance it has been used to oppress women and children, and to justify male dominance in families, communities and even in churches.
- This tool is meant to empower people, especially those who have been victims of the misuse and misinterpretation of biblical texts.
- This tool helps to de-spiritualise a biblical text and puts it in its social-cultural-economic-political context.
- This tool takes the texts of the bible as these are presented in the bible and engages with such texts within their wider context by going through four steps. *(The Four Steps are as presented in*

the PowerPoint presentation, which is added to this manual as Appendix 2. Facilitator goes through PowerPoint presentation on Appendix 2).

- It is easy to miss the purpose of this tool so the facilitator needs to keep everyone on the track. The summary outlined in PowerPoint is good to keep in mind to help guide the discussions.

Tips for facilitation:

- To get participants to engage in the text deeply, you could try creative techniques when the bible passage is being read, such as:
    - Going around the circle and asking participants to read one verse each
    - Asking the group to read out the passage together (in this case, it is helpful to place the text onto a screen so that all participants can read the same version).
    - Be creative!
- It is helpful to write participants responses on the board as the session unfolds, drawing the power relationships map.
- You may need to encourage or prompt participants to:
    - Go into the text and look into it at that time
    - Remember who the people in the text are: the passages just before the focus text will help you to make a list of the people who might be there in this scene
    - Look along the lines of society at the time – not with your own eyes
    - Identify yourself with some of the characters and actors in the story. What power relationships might exist here?

Common questions/comments to be prepared for:

The tool is new and it is difficult (at first) …

The method followed puts too much focus on the problem or issue instead of on Jesus

3.3.2. Activities

Activity option 1: Group Work on textual and contextual mapping

Aims:	Participants explore a new way of approaching and interpreting biblical texts.
Duration:	1 hour
Preparation:	This activity directly follows the Textual and Contextual Mapping demonstration/presentation. The PowerPoint presentation is included in this manual as Appendix 2. .
Set up/Resources:	Pieces of butchers paper and pens for each small group. PowerPoint presentation (including the bible passage, demonstrated method)

Process:

1. The facilitator explains that participants now have a chance to apply the method of textual and contextual mapping demonstrated by the facilitator.
2. Participants are broken into groups of 4-5 people and allocated bible passages to focus on during the workshop. The facilitator briefly explains what the workshop involves and instructs participants to record their responses on the butchers paper, to report back to the wider group.
3. Facilitator leaves 20-30 minutes for participants to discuss in their groups.
4. Each small group presents their discussion to the wider group.

Text: Mark 12:41-44

Stage 1: The Text

- Read the text thoroughly and proceed to the different stages outlined below.
- Discuss the question: What do you think is the text about? There are no wrong or rights answers in this stage.

Stage 2: The Wider Context

Read 12:1-40 (before the text) and 13:1-8 (after the text).

- Identify events or activities that were happening
- Identify places where these events or activities were taking place
- Identify the motives and expectations of the people or characters in the text

Stage 3: The Characters and their Relationships

- Identify the characters in the story
- What is the nature of the relationship between these characters?

Stage 4: Applying the Text

- What do you think of what Jesus said?

- Who make this woman poor?
- Think again: so what do you think is this story really about?

Other Options:

Depending on the number of groups, this tool can be applied to any other text of the bible, including: Luke 10:38-42; Matthew 15:21-28; Luke 7:37-50; Genesis 16:1-16; Luke 19:1-9. The facilitator or the groups may prefer to focus on a different text – such as a favourite text but which you want to re-read using this tool. The groups will follow the same stages as in the example above.

3.4. Biblical Analysis 3Humankind Created in the Image of God

3.4.1. Presentation

Aims:	Participants understand alternative ways of interpreting Genesis 1. Affirm the view that a woman's image does not derive from man, but from God. Guide participants to seek ways to live out and practise the equality between women and men.
Duration:	1 hour
Preparation:	Read and prepare the presentation/study: *Humankind Created in the Image of God.*
Set up/Resources:	A projector, if necessary for the facilitator. Ensure all participants have a copy of the bible study resources, *God's Vision for Human Relationships* (this content is on page 10). The PowerPoint version of this study is included in this manual as Appendix 3, *Male and Female created in the Image and Likeness of God*.
Process:	The facilitator interactively presents the material from the study *Humankind Created in the Image of God*.

Session content and emphasis:

- Facilitator to emphasise what gender equality is not about and what it is about. (*See PowerPoint presentation slides 6 and 7*).
- Equality of male and female an integral part of God and in Christian teaching.
- To say that only man bears God's image is wrong, and to say that woman only has access to God's image through the man is also wrong.
- Being human and to be treated as human is the birth-right of every person.
- To be human is a gift from God – not the prerogative of any person, culture, religion or authority to withhold.
- Both male and female are created in the image and likeness of God
- Male and female are equal **AND** different.
- Both male (man) and female) woman are entrusted with the same and equal responsibility to care for God's creation.
- Both male and female share alike in the blessing & responsibility of procreation – "be fruitful and multiply."
- Sexual intercourse is meant to be a mutual intimate relationship, not a relationship where husband is the dominant one and wife the passive one.
- There is no room for rape and other forms of sexual abuse.
- Both male and female are included in "everything" which God declared as "very good".

- No person, culture, religion, theology, etc has the right to belittle or inferiorise another human being whom God has declared “very good”.

Tips for facilitation:

- Facilitator to read through and be very familiar with the content of study 1 in the *God’s Vision for Human Relationships* resource book.
- Facilitator to read through and be very familiar with the content of PowerPoint *Male and Female created in the Image and Likeness of God* in Appendix 3.
- Use the bible study resource (pages 7-13) as much as possible and be ready to use appropriate slides from Appendix 3.
- Actively and keenly interact with participants.
- Allow enough time for participants to engage with the text in each of the stages through the questions which are provided and other follow-up questions which arise from the discussions.

Common questions/comments to be prepared for:

- Emphasis and focus on gender equality may result in women overpowering men.
- Talk of equality disturbs what are traditionally regarded as women’s responsibilities and men’s responsibilities.

3.4.2. Activities

Aims: Participants practice using alternative ways of interpreting Genesis 1.
Participants explore the view that a woman's image does not derive from man, but from God.
Participants explore ways to live out and practice the equality between women and men.

Activity option 1: Questions for Group Discussion

Objective: Enable participants reflect on the content covered and to apply lessons learnt to their own contexts.

Duration: 1 hour

Preparation: This activity directly follows the session *Humankind created in the image of God.*

Set up/Resources: Pieces of butchers paper and pens for each small group
Printed worksheets for each participant (See questions on page 13 of the study resource booklet).

Process:

Divide into 4 groups (or more if the groups are too big).

Each group to discuss the following questions as on page 13 of the study resource book;

- Group 1: Questions (a) and (b)
- Group 2: Questions (a) and (c)
- Group 3: Questions (a) and (d)
- Group 4: Questions (a) and (e)

Allow 20-30 minutes for group discussion and then gather for plenary feedback from each group

Activity Option 2: Roles and Responsibilities

Objective: To help participants appreciate the difference between biological specific roles and socially-culturally constructed and defined roles and responsibilities.

Duration: 1 hour

Preparation: This activity directly follows the session *Humankind created in the image of God*.

Set up/Resources: Butcher papers and marker pens

Process:

1. Divide into appropriate size groups (depending on the total number of participants).
2. Reproduce the schemas below onto a butcher paper.

Schema 1: List down what the biological-specific roles are for women and men:

Men's Biological-Specific Roles	Women's Biological-Specific Roles

Schema 2: List down what the socially and culturally constructed and defined roles for men and women:

Socially-Culturally Constructed and Defined Roles for Men	Socially-Culturally Constructed and Defined Roles for Women

All groups discuss:

1. Are the roles in Schema 1 exchangeable? Or is a man able to fulfil the roles which a woman is capable of, and vice versa?
2. Are the roles in Schema 2 exchangeable? Or is a man able to fulfil the roles which a woman is capable of, and vice versa?
3. In light of your response to Question 2 above (under Schema 2), what does this mean for the organisation and coordination of responsibilities or duties, talents, skills, expertise, time management, etc. between members of a family or household or community or church?

Activity Option 3: Rethinking the "Crown" of Creation

Objective: To help participants rethink and question the traditional theology and teaching which says that man is the crown (or some say cream) of creation

Duration: 1 hour

Preparation: Read the text of Genesis 1:1-31 – 2:4

Set up/Resources: Butchers paper, pens.

Process: Divide into appropriate group size and do the activity below.

Complete the table below by listing down the sequence of what God created on each day, and then discuss the questions that follow.

Days	**What God Created**
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

- Is there any reference to man (as male) being superior to the woman (as female) in the creation narrative? Explain your answer.
- According to the sequence in the narrative what is the "crown" of creation? (Traditionally "man" is said to be the crown of creation!)

3.5. Biblical Analysis 4 - Woman as Strength Equal to Man

3.5.1. Presentation

Aims:	Present alternative ways of interpreting the text (Genesis 2). Put forward the view that woman is not inferior to man, but is power equal to man. Guide participants to seek ways to live out and practice the equality between women and men.
Duration:	1 hour
Preparation:	This activity directly follows the session "Woman as Strength Equal to Man". Read and prepare Genesis 2 and pp. 16-20 of *God's Vision For Human Relationships (Study 2)*. The PowerPoint version of this study is included in this manual as Appendix 4.
Set up/Resources:	Pieces of butchers paper and pens for each small group. Ensure all participants have a copy of the bible study resources, "Woman as Strength Equal to Man" (p.16-20).
Process:	The facilitator actively and interactively presents "Woman as Strength Equal to Man." Use the questions provided in the study to engage participants in the process. The facilitator can also choose to use the PowerPoint presentation or adapt it to suit context and audience.

Session content and emphasis:

- It is traditionally and commonly thought and taught that because God made the woman after making the man, and from the rib of man, woman is therefore inferior to man and not equal to or with man. This is WRONG!
- The command to not eat from the tree in the middle of the garden was given to the man. God did not give the command to the woman since God gave it to the man before she was made. Yet, it was the woman who was reprimanded by God when she ate the fruit!
- The man had a big problem! He was very lonely in the garden. All other creatures had some kind of partner but not the man. God's initial response to solve the problem was to bring all kinds of animals for him to name. This did not solve his problem of loneliness!
- God realised this problem and made a partner for the man. This solved the man's problem, and he recognised and affirmed this … "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;"
- Renewed scholarly study has shown that the translation, "I will make him a helper fit for him" is a mistranslation of the original Hebrew rendering. A more correct translation of the Hebrew original is "I will make him a power or strength equal to him."

- According to the original Hebrew woman is not just a helper, or an assistant, to the man. She is a power or strength who is equal to him.
- The above rendering of the original Hebrew makes even more sense because the Hebrew word which is translated “rib” in English can also be translated as “side.” Woman was created from the side of man, not just from one his ribs. She is his side, his equal!

Tips for facilitation:

The facilitator must familiarise himself or herself with the contents of the study both in the resource book and PowerPoint.

Common questions/comments to be prepared for:

- Man was created first and so is superior. Woman was created second or last and so is inferior.
- Man is stronger and tougher than woman – physically – so woman needs man for protection.
- Woman was created from the rib of man and so is not equal with the man.
- Man gave the designation or name *woman* and so has control and power over the woman.

3.5.2. Activities

Aims:	Participants practice alternative ways of interpreting the text (Genesis 2). Explore the view that women are not inferior to man, but are a power equal to man. Participants explore ways to live out and practice the equality between women and men.

Activity option 1: Group Discussion

Objective:	To enable participants apply the text in their own contexts today.
Duration:	1 hour
Preparation:	Read and prepare Genesis 2 and pp. 16-20 of *God's Vision For Human Relationships (Study 2)*
Set up/Resources:	Pieces of butchers paper and pens for each small group. Ensure all participants have a copy of the bible study resources *Woman as Strength Equal to Man* (p.16-20).
Process:	Divide into 4 groups. Each group to discuss the 4 questions (30-40 minutes). Decide in your group how you want to record your main points and how you will present your summary at the plenary. Gather for a plenary session where each group can reports. (20-30 minutes).

Activity Option 2: Write Poem, Compose Song, Act Role Play

Objective:	To encourage participants use the power of imagination, skills and talents when given a hypothetical situation in which there are only men (no women) in a community or church, and where there are only women (no men) in a community or church.
Duration:	1 hour
Preparation:	Use of imaginative, writing, acting and composing skills and creativity.
Set up/Resources:	Butchers paper and pens to be made available. Ample space for group performances, projector (for songs, poems, etc.)

Process:

Facilitator decides how many groups. The groups need to be MALE ONLY and FEMALE ONLY.

Scenario for Men's Groups: You are a male human being. Imagine you are all alone except for the birds, animals, reptiles, insects, trees, grass, etc. Imagine there was no other human being, and especially there was no female human being.

Bring the imagination forward to today and imagine there are no female human beings in the community, church, work place, etc.

What would living and life be like?

Scenario for Women's Groups: You are a female human being. Imagine you are all alone except for the birds, animals, reptiles, insect, trees, grass, etc. Imagine there was no other human being, and especially there was no male human being.

Bring the imagination forward to today and imagine there are no male human beings in the community, church, work place, etc.

What would living and life be like?

Activities

Mime or Role Play (Female Only Group & Male Only Group)
Reflect on the above two scenarios and do a mime or a role play to depict the above two scenarios.

Group 2: Write a Poem or Tell the Story (Female Only Group and Male Only Group)

Reflect on the above two scenarios and write a poem to express how you would feel.

Group 3: Compose a Song (Male Only Group and Female Only Group)

Reflect on the above two scenarios and write a poem to express how you would feel.

3.6. Biblical Analysis 5: Power Relations in Society: Re-examining 'turn the other cheek'

3.6.1. Presentation

Aims:	Look closely into and analyse the given text, and restate common interpretations. Present alternative ways of interpreting the text, which depart from the traditional and popular interpretations. Put forward the view that 'turn the other cheek' is not about passive resistance to and silent acceptance of violence but is about active non-violent resistance. Guide participants to seek ways to live out and practice the equality between women and men.
Duration:	1 hour
Preparation:	Read and prepare Matthew 5:28-42 and pp. 23-27 of *God's Vision For Human Relationships (Study 3).* Be familiar also with the PowerPoint presentation in Appendix 5.
Set up/Resources:	Pieces of butchers paper and pens for each small group. Ensure all participants have a copy of the bible study resources, *Power Relations in Society: Re-examining Turn the Other Cheek.* (p.23-27). The PowerPoint version of this study is included in this manual as Appendix 5.
Process:	The facilitator presents the study using the resource book. (The PowerPoint is also available). As with other studies, use the questions as prompts to interact with participants.

Session content and emphasis:

- Commonly in the Pacific this text is like a double-edge weapon. On the one hand it has been used by men, including preachers, to maintain control and power over women – especially in a marriage relationship or where a man and woman live together in a de facto relationship. On the other hand, it has also been used by many church-going women to explain their silence in the face of violence and abuse from men, especially again in a marriage or de facto relationships.
- The words attributed to Jesus in the text have been misinterpreted to mean silent and passive acceptance of evil and violence. This has led to what Walter Wink describes as "doormat theology" – a theology which justifies evil and violence because of what Jesus supposedly said.
- When the text is read within its context, especially within the cultural-social context in which Jesus said the words, the above interpretation is completely wrong.

- The text is centrally about power relations and power dynamics in society. It is about who holds power over whom; it is about how those who hold such power so often choose to abuse power in order to keep control over others.
- Moreover, the text is also about resisting violence and evil. It is about standing up to and resisting injustices. Specifically, it is about actively resisting violence in non-violent ways and means. This is what Walter Wink calls "Jesus' Third Way" which is active non-violent engagement.

Tips for facilitation:

Be very familiar with the contents of the study. Facilitator should actively engage with the participants in the study. Use the questions in the study, especially in Step 2, to help participants dig deeper into the text. In particular read very carefully the culture and practice of striking in the time of Jesus (see p.25-26).

Common questions/comments to be prepared for:

- The words in the text are said by Jesus so we must follow his teachings, and Jesus says "Do not resist an evildoer" and "turn the other cheek".
- Where and when women, especially wives, are abused and violated they should remain faithful and pray hard for their husbands to change.
- Jesus went through and endured violence because he loves us and we should follow his example when we love someone.
- Some cultural practices and attitudes in Oceania are more in line with the Old Testament "eye for an eye" and "tooth for a tooth" mentality. Jesus's words go against these practices and attitudes.

3.6.2. Activities

Aims: Participants apply and practice alternative ways of interpreting the text.
Participants explore the view that 'turn the other cheek' is not about passive resistance to and silent acceptance of others.
Participants explore ways to live out and practice the equality between women and men.

Activity option 1: Group Discussion

Objective: To enable participants to apply the text in their own contexts today.

Duration: 1 hour

Preparation: Read and prepare Matthew 5:28-42 and pp. 23-27 of *God's Vision For Human Relationships (Study 3)*

Set up/Resources: Pieces of butchers paper and pens for each small group. Ensure all participants have a copy of the bible study resources, *Power Relations in Society: Re-examining Turn the Other Cheek* (p.23-27).

Process: Divide into 4 groups. Each group to discuss the 4 questions on page 27 (30-40 minutes). Decide in your group how you want to do the recording of your main points and how you present at the plenary. Gather for a plenary session and each group reports (20-30 minutes).

Activity Option 2: Analysis of a Case Study

Objective: To help and encourage participants to reflect on the text through analysis of a case study which is based on real events but with fictitious person names.

Duration: 1 hour

Preparation: Read the case study well before hand and go through the questions.

Process:

Divide into groups of appropriate size in order to allow active participation from group members in the discussion. Record the group's answers and report back to the plenary. The facilitator sets the time frame for discussions and plenary. See the case study and questions below:

Jone and Salote have been married for 11 years and have 2 children and are expecting their third. Before their marriage they had a relationship for 18 months. During this time they treated each other nicely, told each other that they were meant to be together for life, and assured each other of their love. Each one tried not to make the other angry for fear of harming their relationship. Salote became pregnant and this led to their decision to marry. Being members of a local church their marriage was

officiated by the minister. Three years later signs of trouble began to occur. Jone started spending more time away from home with his friends drinking kava or socialising in night clubs. Salote voiced her concern about this trend but Jone assured her that he still loved and cared for her. Over the next two years, the situations worsened and Jone started to abuse Salote both verbally and physically. He would then apologise, tell Salote that he still loved her, and Salote would forgive him. When Salote became pregnant with their second daughter a close friend of her told her that Jone was having an affair with another woman. She asked Jone about this but he denied it and then beat her. She sought help from the minister. She told the minister that because of her commitment to her marriage and her love for Jone she would not leave him. The minister spoke with Jone and they reconciled. Things seemed fine for sometime but ten years later the violence started again. The beatings became more frequent and severe. Each time Jone apologised and told her that he still loved her and Salote forgave him, painfully holding onto the love that brought them together in the first place. The minister encouraged her to remain firm and faithful to her marriage vows and to keep praying for Jone to change his ways. Jone continued with his violent behaviour and actions toward Salote. She became pregnant again, and bore a son. She prayed that this would improve their relationship. After all, she thought to herself, God is love and can do anything, including changing Jone once again into the loving husband that he used to be.

Questions for discussion:

1) What kind of love did Salote and Jone speak of when they said that they loved each other?
2) Do they have the same understanding of love?
3) How could Jone say that he loves Salote and yet continue to abuse and violate her?
4) Can and/or should love be also violent as in the case of Jone?
5) Should love continue to endure violence and abuse as in the case of Salote?
6) Why does the reconciliation not work, or why is it not efficacious?
7) Is it right for the minister to continue to encourage Salote to pray for Jone, and yet have to stay in the violent relationship and situation?
8) Should Salote continue to endure violence from Jone because it is God's command to love?
9) If you were the couple's Pastor, would you recommend to Salote that she separates from Jone? Explain your answer.
10) What would be the most difficult decision for Salote: (a) to continue to live with Jone in a violent, harmful and abusive relationship; (b) to separate from Jone and file for divorce?

3.7. Biblical Analysis 6 - Mutual Submission between Husband and Wife: Reinterpreting the household codes in Paul's letter to the Ephesians

3.7.1. Presentation

Aims:	Look closely into and analyse Paul's application of Roman cultural household codes to the church in Ephesus Present alternative ways of interpreting the text Put forward the view that the text promotes mutual submission, not one-way submission of the wife to her husband Guide participants to seek ways to live out and practice the equality between women and men
Duration:	1 hour
Preparation:	Read and prepare Ephesians 5 and pp. 30-35 of *God's Vision For Human Relationships (Study 4)*. The PowerPoint version of this study is in Appendix 6.
Process:	The facilitator presents the contents of the study using the resource booklet. The questions in step 2 should be used to encourage active interaction with the participants as they dig deeper into the text.

Session content and emphasis:

- This text has been misread and misinterpreted throughout churches in Oceania since Christianity entered the region. This inherited reading and misinterpretation of this text has its roots in the traditions in which the text was generally read and interpreted in the sending churches of the missionaries.
- The culture in which Paul wrote was one of patriarchy and the family unit was ruled following the tradition *pater-familias*, that is, male head of the family. In *pater-familias*, the one-way wifely submission to the husband was the norm. This cultural family structure was prevalent throughout the Hellenised Roman Empire.
- Paul was very much part of this patriarchal culture of *pater-familias*. As a result he basically took this culture and applied it to the Ephesian church. It was very difficult even for him to speak or write directly against it. However, as deeper analysis will show, he transformed this culture in a very subtle way – by bringing Christ into the marriage relationship between wife and husband.
- It is very common in churches throughout Oceania to read this unit from verse 22, which exhorts a wife to submit to her husband. This is wrong! To be very careful the broader context of the epistle must be taken into consideration, and this unit rightly begins from verse 15.
- Verse 21 is the crucial one in this text as it connects what happens in the context of church worship life (v.15-20) with the context of the family home (v.22-31). Verse 21 is an exhortation for mutual submission both in church life and in the marriage relationship between wife and

husband in the home. There are not two kinds of life – not one kind for the church worship life and another kind for the home and family.

- The wife is to submit to her husband as to the Lord. Two points: the husband is **NOT** the Lord, and the wife's submission is given to the husband on the condition that the husband reflects the nature and qualities of the lordship of Jesus Christ.
- By bringing in the theology of Christ and the church, Paul transforms the cultural one-way wifely submission into a mutual submission between wife and husband. Christ is the head of the church, and to whom the church submits, and husband is the head of the wife. However, given that both husband and wife are members of the one church, therefore both husband and wife submit to Christ. As members of the church both husband and wife are exhorted to submit to one another (verse 21) because in Christ they stand equal on level ground.
- The husband is exhorted to love his wife. This is a no-nonsense kind of love, built upon three pillars: (a) the ultimate self-sacrifice of Christ whereby the husband is exhorted to follow suit and love his wife self-sacrificially; (b) the servanthood of Christ whereby the husband is called upon to stoop down as Christ did and serve his wife (wash his wife's feet); and (c) the respectful and loving treatment by the husband of his own body. Through these exhortations Paul underpins his call for mutual submission between wife and husband!
- Paul brings his exhortation to a climax by returning to the creation story in Genesis to highlight that husband and wife are (created) equal by God.

<u>Tips for facilitation:</u>

Be very familiar with the content of the study.

<u>Common questions/comments to be prepared for:</u>

- Verse 22 says that wives must submit to their husbands.
- It is part of our culture for a wife to submit to her husband.
- Our cultures assign different roles and responsibilities for wives and husbands, and for men and women.
- This teaching about mutual submission is too new and different.

3.7.2. Activities

Aims: Participants apply alternative ways of interpreting the given text.
Participants explore the idea of mutual submission as opposed to one-way submission of the wife to her husband
Participants explore ways to live out and practice the equality between women and men, particularly husbands and wives.

Activity option 1: Group Discussion

Objective: To help participants apply the text to their own contexts.

Duration: 1 hour

Preparation: Read and prepare Ephesians 5 and pp. 30-35 of *God's Vision For Human Relationships (Study 4).*

Set up/Resources: Pieces of butchers paper and pens for each small group. Ensure all participants have a copy of the bible study resources, *Mutual Submission between Husband and Wife* (p.30-35).

Process:

Divide into 4 groups and discuss questions on page 35 as assigned here:

- Group 1: Questions 1 and 2
- Group 2: Questions 3 and 4
- Group 3: Questions 5 & 6
- Group 4: Questions 7 and 1.

Record your group answers and report back to the plenary

Activity Option 2: Testimonials or Couple Role Modelling

Objectives: To encourage participants to tell their stories of living together lovingly and mutually so as to encourage and inspire others.
To enable participants identify couples in their own churches and congregations/parishes who they see as modelling a husband-wife relationship which demonstrates Christ's life and who live mutually with each other.

Duration: 1 hour

Preparation: Read and prepare Ephesians 5 and pp. 30-35 of *God's Vision For Human Relationships (Study 4).* Openness to tell stories and be challenged and inspired

Set up/Resources: If necessary butchers papers and marker pens. Ensure that participants have a copy each of the study resources.

Process:

Do either one or both below:

- Tell a story of you and your husband/wife (if married). Pick one or two examples in which the two of you live out mutual submission in your home or community or church.
- Identify a couple or sets of couples in your own church or community who you see as role models in terms of living out mutual relationships. List down the insights which you learn from these role models, and discuss the impacts they have on you and in your church or community.

Activity Option 3: On Sharing of Responsibilities

Objective: To help participants appreciate that biological-specific roles can be said to be God-given, and that gender roles are constructed and defined by cultures and societies.

Duration: 1 hour

Preparation: Read and prepare Ephesians 5 and pp. 30-35 of *God's Vision For Human Relationships (Study 4).*

Set up/Resources: Butchers paper, marker pens.

Process:

This is almost a repeat of the activity you did for activity option 2 in the first session on "Humankind Created in the Image of God," but with a focus on sharing of responsibilities in the home between wife and husband as one way to demonstrate mutual submission.

Schema 1: List what the biological-specific roles are for women and men, use butchers paper:

Men's Biological-Specific Roles	Women's Biological-Specific Roles

Schema 2: List what the socially and culturally constructed and defined roles for men and women, use butchers paper:

Socially-Culturally Constructed and Defined Roles for Men	Socially-Culturally Constructed and Defined Roles for Women

Discuss:

1. Are the roles in Schema 1 interchangeable? Or is a man able to fulfil the roles which a woman is capable of, and vice versa?
2. Are the roles in Schema 2 interchangeable? Or is a man able to fulfil the roles which a woman is capable of, and vice versa?
3. If the roles you list down in Schema 1 are not interchangeable, what could either one do to help the other carry out their roles as best as possible?
4. If the roles you list in Schema 2 are indeed interchangeable, what could either one do to help share the roles? What are some important factors to bear in mind in the sharing of responsibilities?

3.8. Biblical Analysis 7 - The Myth of the Weaker Vessel

3.8.1. Presentation

Aims: Look closely into and analyse the text (1 Peter 3:1-9).
Present alternative ways of interpreting the text .
Put forward the view that woman is not the 'weaker vessel' but is a 'vessel of honour' and a joint heir of God's grace.
Guide participants to seek ways to live out and practice the equality between women and men.

Duration: 1 hour

Preparation: Read the text 1 Peter 3:1-9 and the bible study *Myth of the Weaker Vessel*. Familiarise yourself with both the biblical text and the contents of the study. The PowerPoint version of this same study is in Appendix 7.

Set up/Resources: Butchers paper, pens, blu tak.

Session content and emphasis:

- As with the last study this text, too, has been used to control women, especially wives, and to put them in 'their place'. As will be shown this is because the text has been misread and misinterpreted so often by churches and preachers throughout Oceania.
- Peter lived in the same cultural-social world in which Paul lived. This was a patriarchal world where the tradition of *pater-familias* (father rule or father headship of the family) and wifely submission were the norm. As with Paul, Peter was powerless to confront such a world and tended to fall prey to it by applying it to the marriage relationship between wife and husband.
- Well known theologian Jürgen Moltmann says of this situation: "Christianity was already taken over by men and made to serve patriarchy."
- Nevertheless as we will see Peter used language which is quite subtle and brings out the equality of women with men, and in this case the equality of a wife with her husband.
- The stereotypical view of women is that they are the weaker sex and, therefore, need the strength and protection of men. The argument goes something like this: "Regardless of what you/we say or believe, the word of God says that women are the weaker vessel. Because women are weaker they are more vulnerable to deception and temptation. It is even more-so for a disabled woman. There are so many things that they do not know and cannot deal with. They need the strong and godly authority of men to guard their hearts and spirits."
- Verse 7 is an exhortation for wives to submit to their "own husbands" so it is wrong to say that this applies to all women. Many women remain single so this does not apply to them.
- The rightful attitude for a husband toward his wife is "in an understanding way, showing ***honour*** to the woman." The call is for the husband to be considerate, empathetic, kind, compassionate

and caring. There is no room for the husband to control, dominate, abuse and violate the wife in any way – no room to belittle, oppress, suppress, or embarrass her.

- "Showing ***honour*** to the woman as the weaker vessel." ***Honour*** is a term that expresses value, worth and respect. "Honour" and "vessel" connect with the biblical image and tradition of pottery and clay. Woman *as* **NOT** *is* the weaker! The Greek that is used in this text is *hōs*, and it means "as" not "is". Small but very important word. Woman is not equivalent to weaker vessel!
- In the tradition of pottery, the finer a piece of work the more precious and valuable it is. The honour given to the woman is because she is a vessel of honour, the work of the master potter and the image bearer of God. A husband is exhorted to treat his wife as valuable, precious and priceless. He is to treat her as more important than himself.
- Jesus used the same word (*hōs*) as recorded in Matthew 10:16, "Behold, I am sending you out *as* sheep in the midst of wolves, so be *as* wise *as* serpents and innocent *as* doves." Jesus did not mean to say that the disciples are equivalent to sheep or to doves or to snakes. Jesus used a figure of speech. Likewise "woman as the weaker vessel" is a figure of speech.
- Wives are "heirs with you [husbands] of the grace of life." Wives are **NOT** inferior to their husbands: they receive God's grace in the same measure as their husbands; they are adopted as children of God just as their husbands; they share the same spirit as their husbands; they have God's imprint (image) just as their husbands. Wives are joint-heirs with their husbands!

<u>Tips for facilitation:</u>

Prepare well. Read the biblical text and the bible study resources. Use the questions provided in step 2 of the bible study to enable participants engage with the text deeper.

<u>Common questions/comments to be prepared for:</u>

- If most women can withstand the pain of childbirth this shows that a woman is not the weaker vessel.
- This study challenges a man's ego, and makes him rethink what being a man means.
- Physically a woman is weak.
- Every person – man, woman, boy, girl – has his/her weaknesses and strengths.

3.8.2. Activities

Aims: Participants explore common and alternative ways of interpreting the text.
Participants explore the idea that women are a vessel of honour and joint heirs of God's grace.
Participants explore ways to live out and practice the equality between women and men, particularly husbands and wives.

Activity option 1: Group Discussion

Objective: To help participants apply the text to their own contexts.

Duration: 1 hour

Preparation: Continues directly from the presentation. Make sure each participant reads the bible text and the bible study beforehand.

Set up/Resources: Butcher's paper marker pens.

Process: Divide into 4 groups and then discuss the questions on page 42 of the study booklet, as assigned below. Record your discussions and report back to plenary.

- Group 1: Questions 1 and 2
- Group 2: Questions 1 and 3
- Group 3: Questions 1 and 4
- Group 4: Questions 1 and 5.

Activity Option 2: "Strength of a Woman" by Shaggy

Objective: Help participants appreciate that women are not weak but have enormous strength and high endurance threshold.

Duration: 1 hour

Preparation: This activity option arises from the session

Set up/Resources: Butchers paper, marker pens. Lyrics of "Strength of a Woman" by Shaggy (see below).

Process: Read and reflect on the lyrics of the song "Strength of a Woman" by Shaggy as written below. Discuss the questions which follow.

Strength of a Woman

(Tune & Lyrics by Shaggy)

So amazing how this world was made
I wonder if GOD is a woman
The gift of life astounds me till this day
I give it up for the woman
She's the constant wind that fills my sail
Oh that woman
With her smile and her style, my
She'll protect like a child
That's a woman

She'll put a smile upon your face
And take you to that (ah) higher place
So don't you under estimate
The strength of a woman
The strength of a woman.

- What are your immediate reactions to the lyrics?
- What stands out most for you?
- Is there a problem with any of the lyrics which you like to point out? Why is this a problem? Explain.
- Do the positive lines remind you of a woman who you see as your model of strength? What have you learnt from this woman?
- Would you write a song or a poem to highlight the strength of a woman whom you regard as your role model? Please do so.

Activity Option 3: "Taking a Stand": Case Study of a Woman of Strength from the Solomon Islands

Objective:	To enable participants to "get into the shoes" of a woman who has demonstrated strength in a situation of ethnic tension and fighting. This real life example is taken from the Solomon Islands during the civil unrest and ethnic troubles from 2000-2003.
Duration:	1 hour
Preparation:	This activity continues from the session.
Set up/Resources:	Make sure that the facilitator and participants read through the case study well before the session, as this will make it easier when groups meet for discussions.
Process:	Divide into groups of appropriate size. Read through the case study and discuss the questions which follow. Record your responses and report back to plenary.

Background;

From 2000-2003, the Solomon Islands plunged into perhaps its lowest and darkest period since the arrival of Christianity and the British colonial administration. Groups of people from the islands of Malaita and Guadalcanal were involved in fights and shootouts on Guadalcanal. Honiara was under siege for months. Many people lost their lives and property. The economy was on the verge of collapse. Some very courageous people worked very hard to bring peace between the warring sides. The majority of these were women. This is the story of one those brave women.

Sister Doreen[1] is from the island of Makira. She was the Provincial Head Sister of the Anglican Church of Melanesia (ACOM) from 2001-2004. This is her story:

"I just wish to tell you the story about an incident that happened last year (2003). That day, I drove the sisters up to CDC1 to weed our garden. Having dropped off the sisters, I was returning to Center when some members of the Peace Monitoring Council (PMC) stopped me at the roadside and told me that they heard from two-way radio that the Malaitan Militants were coming – fully armed, using a police vehicle. They (PMC) were scared to turn the truck back to Honiara because they are all from Guadalcanal, therefore asked me to do it. They were still talking when the truck arrived. I had no time to think about what I would do and how I would approach the militants. I quickly stepped out onto the middle of the road and stood there as they approached. I was more concerned of the fact that a lot of families, men, women and children, were all running away to wherever they could find safety. The truck came right up to where I was standing and stopped. When I looked around all men had fled, only myself and another sister with me on the road remained, alone with fully armed men, all looking aggressive and determined to harm their enemies."

Sister Doreen's fear was overshadowed by concerns for the many more people who were living along the road and were not aware of the truck with armed militants that was coming. She asked them where they were headed and firmly and fearlessly told them to "turn your truck and go back to Honiara." They said that they are going to pick up 40 youths from Goldridge. She told them that they were not telling the truth because Malaitans and people from Guadalcanal were not on good terms and warned them to go back. They attempted three times to proceed on their way but Sister Doreen stood her ground. In the end, she was victorious and the militants turned their truck around and went back to Honiara. Within 20 minutes after the truck was gone, a group of ex Guadalcanal militants appeared and asked her what they had wanted. The commander then told her that if she was not on the road, they would have shot the Malaita militants. While Sister Doreen was controlling, commanding and insisting on the Malaitan armed militants to go back, the Guadalcanal militants were hiding and watching from among the bushes ready to fire on them.

There are many more stories of Sister Doreen and other ACOM Sisters' encounters during the crisis. Sister Doreen admitted that many times she was threatened with guns pointed at her with threats to

[1] This story is adapted from, Sr Doreen, "Taking a Stand," in Charles Brown Beu and Rosalyn Nokise (Eds.), Mission in the Midst of Conflict: Stories from the Solomon Islands, (Suva: God's Pacific People/Pacific Theological College, 2009), 170.173.

shoot her. She received abusive words and was assaulted on many occasions. However, she also acknowledged that at times she felt so confident and brave, and she was not scared of the gun. She said, "In all these experiences, one thing was important to us; we quietly witnessed Christ in a humble way and took the risk to our human lives in a very dangerous and abnormal situation. We love God, we serve God, we care for God's people and God remembers us in times of trouble and suffering."

- From the above story, what can you say about Sister Doreen when compared to the men who ran away and hid?
- Sister Doreen confronted the militants and only another Sister was with her. What were the risks she and her colleague faced?
- Was what she did and said a demonstration of weakness or strength? Did she show that she was a "weaker vessel"?
- "Turn your truck and go back to Honiara." Would you normally say this to gun-wielding, aggressive and hate-filled men? What does this tell you about Sister Doreen?
- The militants finally listened to her and turned back to Honiara: how could you explain this?
- Even the Guadalcanal militants who were hiding in the bushes did not shoot. What does this tell you about their regard for what Sister Doreen was doing at that moment?

3.9. Group Action Planning

This segment of the GET is designed to pull all elements of the participants learning together, and motivate them to put it into action in their churches and communities.

Objectives:	Participants reflect on how their communities are currently receptive to, or implementing, GET Participants put forward concrete steps to implement Gender Equality Theology in their communities and presbyteries.
Duration:	2-3 hours
Set up/Resources:	Ensure that any butchers paper, notes or images that have been created throughout the week are visible for participants to see. 1 piece of butchers paper and pens for each group is needed

Process:

- The facilitator explains that lots of material has been covered during the training, but the purpose of all learning is to be useful and to bring about change.
- The facilitator asks, "What will you do next to implement what you have learned?" or "What strategies will your presbytery/session (or other appropriate group) put in place to move toward gender equality?"
- The facilitator breaks participants into groups (presbyteries, sessions or another appropriate group) to discuss strategies (1-2 hours).
- Each group presents to the wider group of participants regarding the plans they hope to implement.

4. Energisers and Ice Breaker Activities

Energisers and Ice Breaker Activities are very important activities during a workshop. The facilitator should have a number of different energisers and ice breakers ready for when there is need. Participants can also be invited to volunteer an energiser or ice breaker. Energisers and Ice Breakers are needed during the course of a day during the workshop:

- As an entry point into a session;
- As an activity to demonstrate a particular important point of a session;
- As an activity to bring participants out of sleepiness, drowsiness or tiredness, especially after a meal such as lunch;
- As an activity for the participants to enjoy. When enjoyment is part of a workshop, learning is effective.

Examples of energisers and ice breakers:

- Sing a Song with actions, e.g. “I will make you fishers of men” or “Fruit Salad” etc.
- Acting and spelling out words using entire body movements, e.g. COCONUT, LOVE, etc
- Musical Chair
- Simon Says Game
- Simon Says Song
- Last one standing game
- Etc.

5. Evaluation and Feedback Activities

Activity 1:

This activity is best used in the middle or at the end of the workshop, once participants have been exposed to new ideas and content. It could be used in both instances.

Objectives: Participants reflect on the training so far, including what has been helpful and what has been difficult to understand
This exercise also allows facilitators to get a sense of participants learning so far, in order to adapt their approach.

Duration: 20 minutes

Set up/Resources: Two post-it notes are distributed to each participant. Different colours can be used for different categories of participants (i.e. women, men, youth etc)

Two plates or sheets of butcher's paper (one with a smile face or tick, one with a sad face or cross) are placed in a visible location.

Process:

- The facilitator explains that participants will have a chance to reflect on how the training has been for them. The facilitator asks participants to reflect on something that is good about the training or something that they have learned, as well as something that they did not like or understand from the training.
- The facilitator explains that participants will record their responses on the post-it notes and place them onto the plate/butchers paper/picture that corresponds with the nature of the comment. I.e. if it is a positive comment or learning, participants will place their comment onto the smile face; If it is a comment regarding lack of understanding, it will be placed onto the frowning face.
- The results of this activity should be collated and shared with the participants at some stage throughout the training.

Activity 2:

This activity is best used in the middle or at the end of the workshop, once participants have been exposed to new ideas and content. It could be used in both instances.

Objectives: Participants reflect on the openness of their church community to Gender Equality Theology material

Duration: 15 mins-45 mins (depending on number of areas represented)

Set up/Resources: A smile face and a frown face are drawn on two large pieces of butcher's paper are placed side by side on the ground in front of all of the participants

10 stones/rocks/items are placed in between these two faces
Someone should be ready to take photographs or notes during this exercise.

Process:

- The facilitator asks participants: When you go back to your presbytery, how much do you think what you have learned in this workshop will be applicable and relevant?"
- A representative from each presbytery/area will be called up to the font and asked to place stones on the appropriate face (smiling or frowning). The stones will represent how positively or negatively they or their presbytery will respond to the ideas covered in the training. The facilitator explains that the stones represent how true something is: if 3 stones are placed onto the smile face, it means that 30% or 3 out of 10 people would find accept the messages of the training. The remaining 7 stones would be placed on the frown face.
- The facilitator should demonstrate the exercise using an example and encourage participants by saying that the forum is an open space, in which we show respect for one another.
- The facilitator then invites the first representative forward to place the stones and justify their answer. Whilst this occurs, a designated person should document the responses by taking photos or recording the number of stones that have been placed in each category.
- Throughout the exercise the facilitator reminds all participants to be honest and open.

This process can be used to evaluate any statement that asks, "to what extent…." is something true?

Activity 3: The facilitator can also come up with other creative and helpful ways of doing an evaluation activity following the leads above.

Topical Issues to be aware of:

Training manual/facilitation

- Stories and anecdotes play an important part of facilitating this material. They provide examples that are easy for participants to relate to.
- Important that the facilitator gives space to the participants to answer – and then provides clarification and feedback on these comments – for the sake of theological integrity.

Common red flags

- 'Forgive and forget' mentality when it comes to domestic violence.
- 'God hates divorce' – understanding that divorce is sometimes the best of two bad options (when there is violence involved).

6. Activity Resources

Appendix 1: Powerpoint slides - *Human Rights, Responsibilities and Theology*

Appendix 2: Powerpoint slides - *Approaching the Bible: Textual & Contextual Mapping*

Appendix 3: Powerpoint slides - *Analysis of Genesis 1: Male & Female Created in the Image and Likeness of God*

Appendix 4: Powerpoint slides - *Analysis of Genesis 2: Woman as Strength Equal to Man*

Appendix 5: Powerpoint slides - *Analysis of Matthew 5: Power Relations in Society*

Appendix 6: Powerpoint slides - *Analysis of Ephesians 5: Mutual Submission between husband and wife*

Appendix 7: Powerpoint slides - *Analysis of 1 Peter 3: Myth of the 'Weaker Vessel'*

Appendix 8: *Human Rights and Christian Theology – A View from Oceania* by Rev Dr Cliff Bird

Appendix 9: *UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

Appendix 10: *Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities*

PowerPoint Presentation 1
"God's Vision for Human Relationships"

Human Rights and Responsibilities and Theology

1

Human Rights: a universal phenomenon

- Human rights are a ***fact*** in our world today. Various UN declarations of various conventions are proof of this.
- Human rights are an ***important*** fact in our world. All major threats to humanity are international or global in nature: nuclear threat, the ecological crisis, poverty, the arms race, unemployment, drug traffic, torture, land mines, abuse of women and children, etc. Who will/can stop these?

2

Human Rights: a universal phenomenon *cont'd*

- Human rights have evolved to fulfill the need for a *universal* morality, a morality that transcends national, cultural and religious interests. Examples include: murder or killing, rape, destruction of environments, etc.

3

Challenge: Suspicion & Fear of Language

- Various regions of the world suspicious of the "human rights" language: African and Asian countries consider human rights to be a Western imposition on their national affairs and cultural integrity. What about the Pacific?
- Some argue that *morality* is situational not universal. This raises critical questions: Is rape not wrong in some societies? Is murder not evil in some societies? Is wife bashing considered a "good" in some cultures?

4

Suspicion & Fear of Language

- Churches and Christian groups' fear and suspicion regarding human "rights" language.

➢ human rights framed within the Western worldview and cultures.

➢ Human rights over emphases on individual rights at the expense of communal rights.

Question: What is or might be the general attitude to human rights in your country? Church? Community?

5

Challenge: Theological Controversy

- Growing support for the struggle for human rights, but still a controversial issue – four positions:

a. the Bible is silent about human rights.
b. the church should be concerned with saving souls for heaven rather than protecting and empowering humans for life on earth.
c. concern should be with God's sovereignty and God's rights, rather than with human rights.
d. Christians should be mediators of reconciliation, instead of helping and encouraging people to claim their human rights.

What are you thoughts, reactions, etc?

6

Goal and Intention of Human Rights

- protect individuals and groups against the abuses of power by institutions & structures
- make life more human: law in general and of human rights in particular aim to curb selfishness, ruthlessness and injustice, and to protect the interests and well-being of the vulnerable, the weak and the marginalized groups in society: women, children, people living with disabilities, etc.
- (*The above connect strongly with the Judaeo-Christian emphases and teachings … details later*).

7

Example: Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

Article 1: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

Article 3: Everyone has the right to life, liberty [freedom] and security of person.

Article 4: No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5: No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Question: Are these rights irrelevant to your context, and simply "Western" ideas and impositions?

8

Example: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Article 1: Purpose of the Convention is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

Question: Is this right irrelevant to your context, and simply "Western" idea and imposition?

9

Example: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities *cont'd*

Article 3 – Principles of Convention:

- Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons;
- Non-discrimination;
- Full and effective participation and inclusion in society;
- Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity;
- Equality of opportunity;
- Accessibility;
- Equality between men and women;
- Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.

Question: Are these principles irrelevant in your context and simply imposed by Western countries?

10

Example: Convention on the Rights of a Child

- **Article 2 (2):** States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members.
- **Article 6 (1):** States Parties recognize that every child has the inherent right to life.
- **Article 6 (2):** States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.

11

Human Responsibilities Too!

- It is not just HUMAN RIGHTS; it is also HUMAN RESPONSIBILITIES!
- Human rights tradition **did not** emerge in a vacuum.
- The language of rights did not exist in much of the earlier traditions. What existed were duties and responsibilities which people acquired and carried out by virtue of being part of a group – family, tribe or clan, community, religion, state, etc.

12

Human Responsibilities Too *cont'd*

- Yet duty a or a responsibility carried out was recognition of, even reciprocal action to, some assumed or affirmed integrity and dignity – *chicken or egg analogy!*
  - ➢ E.g. 1: Duty of care given by a parent or guardian to a child was recognition and affirmation that the child by nature needed care – food, water, shelter, safety, love, etc. Cf *convention …*
  - ➢ E.g.2: Responsibility of a Gov. to protect indigenous peoples is an affirmation of the honor and dignity of such peoples. Cf *convention …*
- Correlation between duties and rights.

13

Theology & Human Rights: being human as everyone's birth-right

- Foundational theological truth: being human is everyone's birth-right. Each person's humanity is founded on God who "created them male and female" in God's image.
- Put another way: God has blessed each and every child, boy, girl, man and woman with the right and responsibility to be human.

14

Theology & Human Rights: being human as everyone's birth-right *cont'd*

- Being human comes with human capacities and tendencies:
  - ➢ To love and to hate; to share and to greedily hoard; to speak the truth and to lie; to serve and to dominate; to hope and despair; to express joy and sadness; to embrace and shun others; to feel guilty or ashamed; to relish acceptance and forgiveness and to hold grudge and retaliate, etc.

E.g. What is the struggle Paul describes in Roman 7?

15

Theology & Human Rights: being human as everyone's birth-right *cont'd*

- Human rights and human responsibilities spur and guide people toward fuller humanity and discourage and draw us from our baser tendencies.
- Declaration of the human rights – e.g. human beings are born free (Article 1), right to life, liberty and security of person (Article 3), prohibition of slavery or servitude Article 4), prohibition of torture or inhuman/degrading treatment or punishment (Article 5) – are intended to make our humanity more *humane* and fuller.

16

Theology & Human Rights: Judeo-Christian Contents – grace upon the marginalised

- *Recap*: purpose of human rights – aim to protect individuals and groups against the abuses of power by institutions & structures.
- make life more human: purpose of law in general and of **human rights in particular aim to prevent selfishness, ruthlessness and injustice, and to protect the interests of the vulnerable, the weak and the marginalized groups in society: women, children, people living with disabilities,** etc.

17

Theology & Human Rights: Judeo-Christian Contents – grace upon the marginalised

- All of these echo the Judeo-Christian conviction that God is concerned with liberating, sustaining, guiding and accompanying people who are being pushed to the margins.
- What we hear of God's concern for Israel, applies to all people who are left half dead on the sides of the roads of life.

18

Theology & Human Rights: Judeo-Christian Contents – grace upon the marginalised

- the LORD said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land ..." (Exodus 3:7f.) *Right to be free.*
- God speaks through the Psalmist's conscience: "Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute" (Ps 82:3). *Right to justice.*
- God through Solomon: "he who oppresses a poor man insults his Maker, but he who is kind to the needy honours him" (Proverbs 14:31). *Right to justice, food, water, shelter and honor/dignity.*

19

Theology & Human Rights: Judeo-Christian Contents – grace upon the marginalised

- **"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." (Luke 4:18f.)**
- **Jesus promised grace to the poor, to the hungry and the sorrowful (Luke 6:20f.) and he lived out the gospel by healing the sick, driving out demons and sharing his life with the marginal people of society.**
- If Christians want to be found where Jesus Christ is active in the world, then they must show healing, saving and liberating solidarity with those whose human dignity is injured or threatened.

20

Human Rights: structures to protect and enhance human dignity

- In the final analysis human rights provide the structures to protect and enhance human dignity. Human dignity from theological perspective is endowed by God and reaffirmed in/by Jesus Christ.
- With this knowledge and assurance the Christian faith can joyfully presume the providence of God at work in the human rights tradition.

21

Christ-likeness and human rights

- Jesus was/is both Son of God and Son of Man. This highlights two primary truths:

1. Jesus reveals more of God to human beings.
2. Jesus reveals more of what it means to be truly and fully human.

- To be Christ-like, therefore, is to keep moving toward the goal of true and fuller humanity as taught and demonstrated by Jesus. Human rights provide the structures to help us move in this direction!

22

Thank you ...

23

PowerPoint Presentation 2
God's Vision For Human Relationships.

Tool for Biblical Analysis

Approaching the Bible: Textual and Contextual Mapping.

1

INTRODUCTION

The Bible as been used (and continues to be used) as a tool:

- to overpower others/us from their/our rights, properties etc.
- to justify issues in Pacific communities, e.g. violence against women, Climate Change & the Rainbow, etc.

We need to use the same tool:

- to empower others/us.
- to address our issues that we are facing

2

TEXTUAL AND CONTEXTUAL MAPPING

- Apart from the Bible, we also need other tools such as commentaries, bible dictionaries, text books, internet etc in our preparation to teach or educate others.
- Most of us come from places where there's no library to do our research for our preparation. Some of us come from villages where we don't have access to internet
- This method will help you/me to use what we have, and that is the Bible. It helps us to analyze the text based on what is provided and to contextualise it to our present context.
- 4 stages to do this textual and contextual mapping

3

TEXT: JOHN 8: 1-11

READ JOHN 8:1-11 TOGETHER

4

John 8:1-11 – Woman Caught in Adultery

8 [1] **while Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.** [2] Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. 3 The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, 4 they said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. 5 Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" 6 They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. 7 When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." 8 And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. 9 When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. 10 Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" 11 She said, "No one, sir." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again."

5

STAGE 1

- WHAT IS THE TEXT ABOUT?
- ***PLENARY*** (People feel free to share what they know, understand about the text/story, either from Sunday school, from preachers, ministers etc).
- Remember, there's no wrong and right answer here.
- This is a space for each person to share what they understand or know about the story or text from their own perspective.

6

STAGE 2

WIDER CONTEXT:

- READ CHAPTER 7 (BEFORE) AND CHAPTER 8:12-20 (AFTER) THE TEXT
- Follow the flow of the story and:
  - ➢ Identify events and places where these events happen in the stories
  - ➢ Ascertain what Jesus is doing, emphasizing or saying
  - ➢ Outline Expectations, Hopes and Fears of actors/actresses and common people

7

Wider Context *cont'd*

TEXT	EVENT	WHERE	What Jesus did & said
5: 1-18	Jesus heals on the Sabbath	Jerusalem	Jesus doing healing on Sabbath
5: 19-29	The authority of the Son	Jerusalem	Jesus said that he is same with God
5:30-47	Witnesses to Jesus	Jerusalem	Jesus said that he is greater than John
6: 1-15	Jesus feeding 5 thousand	Galilee	Jesus feed 5000 with 5 loaves & 2 fish
6: 16-21	Jesus walks on the water	Capernaum	Jesus walks on the water
6:22-59	The bread from heaven	Capernaum	Jesus said 'I am the bread of life'
6:60-71	The words of eternal life		Jesus said 'have to come to him, if granted by the Father'
7: 1-9	The unbelief of Jesus' brothers	Galilee	Jesus said 'the world hate me'
7:10-24	Jesus at the Festival of Booths	Jerusalem	Jesus said 'my teachings are not mine but who sent me'
7:25-31	People asking, who is Jesus?	Jerusalem	Jesus said 'I am not come on my own but the one who sent me'
7:32-36	Temple police sent to arrest Jesus	Jerusalem	Jesus said ' where I am you cannot find
7:37-39	Rivers of living water	Jerusalem	Jesus said 'let anyone who is thirsty come to me'
7:40-44	Division among the people	Jerusalem	Jesus cause confusion of who he was
7:45-52	The unbelief of those in authority	Jerusalem	Jesus was hated by the authority
8:1-11	The woman caught in adultery	Mt Olives	Jesus said 'neither do I condemn you, go your way and sin no more'
8: 12-20	Jesus the Light of the world	Jerusalem	Jesus said 'I am the light of the world'
8:21-30	Jesus forfeited his death	Jerusalem	Jesus said ' when you have lifted the son of man, then you would have realized that it was me'

8

Stage 3

- WHO ARE THE MAIN CHARACTERS/actors or actresses

Jesus	Nicodemus
Jesus' brothers	Scribes
Crowd	Woman
People of Jerusalem	Elders
Pharisees	Man caught adultery
Chief Priests	(Moses)
Temple polices	(Father)
Authorities	

9

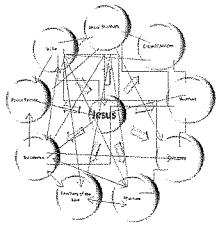
Analyse the characters

- WHAT DOES THIS TEXT TELL US ABOUT THESE CHARACTERS? THEIR PERSONALITIES. For example Nicodemus? Who is he? Or the crowd etc
- WHAT IS THEIR RELATIONSHIP LIKE?

10

Tool to identify relationship

- KEYS: very Strong: ⟷ Strong: ⟶ Neutral: —— Broken: ⟶



11

WHAT ARE THE POWER RELATION BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT CHARACTERS IN THE TEXT?

Most Powerful ⟷ Least Powerful

Pharisees	Crowd	Jesus	Jesus' Brothers	Woman
Teachers of the Law	People of Jerusalem	Disciples	Man	
Scribes	Jews			
Nicodemus				
Authorities				

12

Stage 4

- Identify yourself with these characters/actors/actresses in the story.
- What power relations or dynamics exist in the issue of e.g. domestic violence?

13

Stage 4 *cont'd*

- HOW DO OUR CHURCH(ES) AND SOCIETIES DEAL WITH ISSUES, PARTICULARLY AS THEY AFFECT WOMEN/CHILDREN?
- AND WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO IN RESPONSE?

14

PowerPoint Presentation 3
God's Vision for Human Relationships

Analysis of Genesis 1:26-31

Male and Female Created

in the Image and Likeness of God

God's Vision: Human Dignity and Equality as Integral to the *Being* of God

- Western traditional theology: teaches God as Trinity – Father, Son & Holy Spirit. That is, the *being* of God presented and experienced in 3 ways. [Note: "Father" not in the sense of biological human father, thus the word "begotten Son"]. **Within the Trinity the 3 "persons" are of equal standing and dignity.**
- Christology: Jesus Christ the greatest "leveller" of all time. **In Christ all are equal and different.**
- Pneumatology (theology of the Holy Spirit): **all given the same life by the same Spirit.**
- It follows, therefore, that biblically/theologically, dignity and equality are integral to being human.
- Being human as male and female are gifts from God to be acknowledged, affirmed and practiced

Some Misconceptions …

- Man is superior and woman is inferior. Woman is not equal to or with man.
- Only man is created in the image of God.
- Woman has access to God's image only through man.
- Woman had the image of God, but this image was lost when she ate the forbidden fruit.
- Woman can regain this image through her husband in/through marriage.

Some Misconceptions … *cont'd*

- Woman is created only as "helper" to the man, not to occupy the same level as man.
- Woman is created from the rib of man and, therefore, inferior to man.
- Wife, being a women, must always submit to her husband, not the other way round.
- Wife is meant for the home and home for the wife.

Deep Questions of Faith ...

- What does or would God say about abuse of and violence against fellow human beings?
- Do our interpretations of the bible uphold and advance God's original vision of the equality and dignity of both men and women, female and male?
- What must we do with our interpretations and beliefs that deny God-given equality and dignity?
- What must we do with our cultures that set women lower than men?

What Gender Equality is NOT About ...

- Women stepping and ruling over men
- Women taking over all that men do, whether in homes/families, church, or wider society
- Women having unrestrained freedom to do anything and everything they want to do regardless of the cost to themselves, families, society, etc, (it is men who tend to want to do this ... the *macho* mentality)

What Gender Equality IS About ...

- Recognising, affirming and respecting the dignity of women and their equality with men as given by God
- Removing the barriers which hinder women from reclaiming the place (of dignity and equality) which God intends from the beginning
- Ensuring that women have the opportunities to enjoy abundant life
- Men letting go of their pride and iron-grip control over so many things and allowing themselves to be on the same level alongside women as God had intended from the very beginning.

Analysis of Genesis 1: 26-28

- What does Genesis 1: 26-28 say?
- How are we to interpret and understand the text in light of God's vision for human relationships?

Creation Narrative 1: Genesis 1:26-28 (NRSV)

26 Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image,
according to our likeness; and let them have dominion
over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and
over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth,
and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the
earth."

27 So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

28 God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful
and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have
dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of
the air and over every living thing that moves upon the
earth."

Male & Female Created in God's Image

- To be human and be treated as human is the **birth-right** of every woman, man, boy and girl.
- This birth-right goes across and beyond all cultures & contexts.
- This right is endowed by God only & not by any human or culture or religion, etc.
- Being a male & being a female are part & parcel of being human, & must be affirmed, respected, celebrated, and practiced.

Male & Female Created in God's Image
cont'd

- "Let us make humankind [Heb. *Adam*] ..." (NRSV).
- *Adam* (humankind) is connected to *adamah,* the Hebrew word for ground or earth or dust.
- *Adam* is a creature of the earth or the ground.
- *Adam* is the generic term for humankind.
- Male human being & female human being are both created in the image& likeness of God
- Dignity and equality are God-given.

Male & Female Created in God's Image
cont'd

- Male and female are equal **AND** different. Both have dignity and equality rooted in God.
- Who is "us"? (Trinity is a NT concept or idea.)
- What is "image of God" (*imago Dei*)?

a) Substantive interpretations ...reason, intellect, freewill, spiritual & moral characteristics

b) Relational interpretations ... relationships between plural majesty, relationality & communion in God imaged between female and male

c) Functional interpretations ... function to "have dominion," i.e. not something humans possess but something we do

Male and Female Entrusted with the Same Responsibility of Care

- Both man and woman are entrusted with the same and equal responsibility to care for God's creation.
- This command implies delegated power that is given equally to man and woman.
- Note: the command is to "have dominion" not to "dominate."
- "Have dominion" is about stewardship and care.

Male and Female Entrusted with the Same Responsibility of Procreation

- Both male and female share alike in the blessing & responsibility of procreation – "be fruitful and multiply."
- Procreation is both a right and responsibility shared between the male and female. Sexual intercourse is meant to be a mutual intimate relationship, not a relationship where man is the dominant one and woman the passive one.
- Here there is no room for rape and other forms of sexual abuse.

God Declared ALL Creation "Very Good"

Genesis 1:31 (NRSV)

- "God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good."
- Both male and female are included in "everything" which God declared as "very good".
- No person, culture, religion, theology, etc has the right to belittle or inferiorise another human being whom God has declared "very good".

God "was refreshed"

Exodus 31:17b (NRSV)

- " ... and on the seventh day he [God] rested, **and was refreshed**."
- Exodus 31:17b a very human view and image of God as being "**refreshed**".
- The text tells that the work of creating had moved and affected God deeply in his/her inner being. This includes the creation of male and female! *(Let your imagination run deep and free).*

Q & A and Group Work

For Group Work refer bible study resources booklet, page 13. Discuss the questions in your group, write your responses down clearly, and then report during plenary.

PowerPoint Presentation 4
God's Vision for Human Relationships

Analysis of Genesis 2:4b-25

Woman as Strength Equal to Man

Creation Narrative 2: Genesis 2: 4b-25

Two important points to bear in mind:

- This creation narrative is the older one of the two traditions or stories.
- This story is different in significant ways to the one in Genesis 1. Genesis 1 story highlights dominion, or human mastery, over creation. Genesis 2 story highlights the role of the man to till and care for the Earth; man is presented as servant of the Earth, not master over it.

Creation Narrative 2: Genesis 2: 4b-25

7 then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being.
8 And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed ... 15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it ... 18 Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner" ... there was not found a helper as his partner. 21 So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. 22 And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 23 Then the man said,

"This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
this one shall be called Woman,
for out of Man this one was taken."

24 Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

Ish (man) and *Ishshah* (woman) both human beings!

- In Genesis 2 God is seen as making a model human being (*adam*) from earth (*adamah*) and breathing life into it.
- The breath or spirit (*ruach*) of God gave life to *adam*.
- This first human being is called man (*ish*, v.18), and from the man (*ish*) God made a female human being, woman, (*ishshah*, v.23).
- The male human being (*ish*) and female human being (*ishshah*) are companions.

The Forbidden Fruit

Important to Note:

- To whom was the command to not eat of the tree in middle of the garden given?
- Was the command given before or after the woman was made?
- Who was reprimanded or blamed by God for disobeying the command?

Huge Problem Facing the Man!

Briefly discuss the following questions:

- What was the man to do (v.15)?
- God realised a big problem: What was this problem (v.18)?
- How did God try to solve the problem (v.19-20a)? What was the problem with God's first response to solve the man's problem?
- What then did God decide to do (v.20b)?
- How did the man respond to God's second response to his problem (v.23)?

So where does this lead all this lead us?

Woman: power equal to man!

- The words "I will make him a helper fit for him" have been interpreted to mean that woman is inferior to man, a kind of assistant to man, not equal to him. ***This is wrong interpretation!***
- The Hebrew Bible most frequently uses *'ezer* to describe a superior helper. God is referred to as the *'ezer* ("helper") of Israel. (Exod. 18:4; Deut. 33:7, 26; Ps 33:20; 70:5; 115:9, 10, 11, etc.)

Reflect: The same word used for the woman is used also to describe God. Does this mean that God is inferior to Israel? Apply this to the woman!

Woman: power equal to man *cont'd*

- There is also an alternative (more correct) translation: God said "I will make him *'ezer knegdô."*
- The Hebrew *'ezer* is a combination of two root words: *'-z-r* (to rescue, to save) and *g-z-* (to be strong).
- Thus *'ezer* originally meant "to save" and/or "strength." Two insights: woman as saviour of man, and woman as power or strength equal to man. Yet ...
- The second word *knegdô* appears only once in the Hebrew Bible and means "equal".
- Therefore, the phrase "I will make him *ezer knegdô*," is rightly translated as "I will make him a power or strength equal to him," instead of "I will make him a helper fit for him."
- Share your thoughts: "woman – power equal to man."

Woman: power equal to man *cont'd*

- The translation "power or strength equal to him" makes sense in light of immediate context of both creation accounts:
  - ➢ both male and female created in God's image and likeness (Gen. 1);
  - ➢ both are entrusted with the same and equal responsibility to exercise dominion (Gen. 1);
  - ➢ both share alike in the blessing and responsibility of procreation (Gen. 1)
  - ➢ ultimately both come from the same earthly stuff – ground, and are to be carers of earth (Gen. 2);
  - ➢ both share the same spirit/breath (Gen. 2).

Woman: made from the "side" of man

- The Hebrew word translated into English as "rib" can also be translated as "side". Examples –
  - ➢ "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam; and while he slept, He took one of his ribs *or* **a part of his side** and closed up the [place with] flesh," (Amplified Bible, AMP).
  - ➢ "And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took **one of his sides** and closed up the flesh in its place," (Jubilee Bible 2000, JB 2000).
  - ➢ "So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep, and while he was asleep, he took **part of the man's side** and closed up the place with flesh," (New English Translation, NET).
  - ➢ "So the LORD God caused ·the man to sleep very deeply [[L]a deep sleep to fall on the man/Adam], and while he was asleep, God removed one of the man's ·ribs [***or* sides**]. Then God closed up the man's skin at the place where he took the ·rib [***or* side**]," (Expanded Bible, EB).

Woman: made from the "side" of man *cont'd*

- When the word "rib" is replaced with the word "side" it brings a whole new perspective and meaning to the text. Taking these versions seriously, it is rightly possible to argue that God formed woman from half of man. Man and woman are to stand and live side-by-side as persons of equal humanity and dignity.
- According to the man's acclamation, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh ...," the woman is both bone and flesh of the man, not just his bone (or rib). Woman was just as perfect a creation as man, and is equally patterned after the image and likeness of God.

Woman: made from the "side" of man *cont'd*

- That the man calls the new human being *ishshah* or woman does not mean that she is therefore inferior to the man; naming here is not only an expression of joy, contentment and wholeness but also recognition and affirmation of the divine gift of the woman.

Reflect: So why are these "power equal to man" and "side" translations not popularly used?

Question for Reflection

- Why do you think are these "power equal to man" and "side" translations not popularly used?

Group Work

- (See separate handouts.)

PowerPoint Presentation 5
God's Vision for Human Relationships

Analysis of Matthew 5 v 38-42

Power Relations in Society: Re-Examining "Turn the Other Cheek"

Power Dynamics in Society

- In most, if not all, societies power is directly related to control: who has power? Who controls who? Who controls what? Who has more control, who has less control? (Ref. *Textual Mapping*)
- Social relations are also power relations, for good or bad – e.g. social relations between a chief and commoners is also about the power relations and power dynamics between these two groups of people.
- Social relations/power relations can be used for the good or harm of fellow human beings. (Ref. *Textual Mapping*)

Social Relations in Jesus' Time

- Jesus was born into, lived and carried out his ministry in a pre-industrial agricultural system when Rome was the imperial power.
- This was a domination system where one class of people – the wealthy & the powerful – ruled the society.
- This was the type of society in which the Gospel was declared and took roots.

Social Relations in Jesus' Time

Four primary features of societies in Jesus' time:

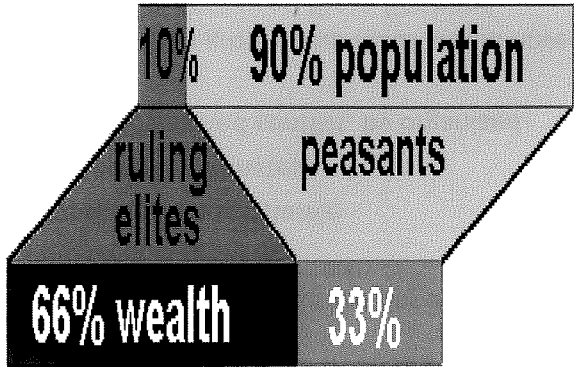
- Politically oppressive
- Economically exploitative
- Religiously legitimated
- Marked by armed conflict, by organised violence

As a young man growing up Jesus would have seen and experienced these firsthand

A Two-Class Society

- The above system produced a primarily two-class society, which is different to the way we understand society today.
- Very small class at the very top, no significant middle class, vast majority of the population at the bottom
- This division was both political and economic

A Two-Class Society



Two-class Society *cont'd*

Urban ruling elites/class comprised:

- King, aristocratic families, high government officials, and
- Retainers (servants, army, lower govt. officials, religious officials)
- Together these comprise only about 10 percent of the population.

Two-class society *cont'd*

Ruled (subjects) or lower class comprised:

- Peasants (majority), fishermen, trades people such as carpenters & tanners, and other manual workers. Includes the category commonly described "sinners"
- Together these comprise about 90 percent of the population

The Text – Matthew 5:38-42 (NRSV)

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for
an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 But I say to
you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone
strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other
also; 40 and if anyone wants to sue you and take
your coat, give your cloak as well; 41 and if
anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the
second mile. 42 Give to everyone who begs from
you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to
borrow from you.

Analysing the Crowd on the Mountain …

Matthew. 4:23-25

- The sick and demon possessed, the poor and destitute, the sinners, "crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan, (i.e. mostly those from the lower peasant class).
- Matthew 5: crowds (as in 4:23-25 above), disciples (c.f. 4:18-22 – Simon Peter, Andrew, James & John sons of Zebedee, others?) Religious leaders amongst the crowd also.
- ***Question:*** What were the power relations between these groups of people?

Wider Context of Matthew 5:38-42

- Located within the part of Matthew's gospel commonly known as "Sermon on the Mount". This sermon runs from the beginning of chapter 5 to the end of chapter 7. (In 5:1 Jesus went up on a mountain, and in 8:1 Jesus came down from the mountain.)
- This whole section (chapters 5-7) is the inaugural speech/sermon by Jesus.
- The section is primarily about what following Jesus means and requires within the horizon of the reign/kingdom of God which he had just declared (see chapter 4 verses 17 & 23).

OT Background/Context to the Text: Retributive Justice

- OT law (Lev. 24:19-20, Deut. 19:21, Exod. 21:22-25) deals with "retributive justice," i.e. justice understood as paying back what is "fair and square."
- Retributive justice means **one** eye (**NOT** two or more eyes) for an eye, and **one** tooth (**NOT** two or more teeth) for a tooth.
- Fair and Square!

OT Retributive Justice Annulled and Transformed

- The words by Jesus, "But I say to you ..." are filled with authority – authority to annul what was old or what was the practice, and to institute the new; authority to transform the death-dealing law into life-giving law.
- Through these words Jesus stamped his authority and set the tone and direction of his message of the reign/kingdom of God.

Non-Resistance Toward Evil?

Matthew 5:39a – "But I say to you, do not resist an evildoer."

- Did Jesus mean that we should/must allow evildoers to run riot and do whatever they want to do, even if it was wrong or evil?
- ('Door-mat theology' – do not resist those who do evil, do not resist those who abuse you, or those who violate your dignity. Let them do as they please – just be a door-mat!)
- E.g. women who endure violence – just pray for the husband to change, etc?
- Jesus' meant: "do not resist an evildoer" ***with violence.***

"Turn the other cheek"

- "Do not resist an evildoer" and "turn the other cheek" together have traditionally or commonly been taken to mean silent acceptance of injustices and evil that are perpetrated on persons.
- This is a wrong interpretation of the text. The text is more about powers relations and power dynamics in society, as the following analysis shows.

Striking in the World of Jesus: reinterpreting "turn the other cheek"

- The left hand was used only for so-called dirty purposes.
- To use the right hand closed fist to strike a person mean that the being struck is equal to or has equal standing with the striker.
- The situation Jesus had in mind, therefore, was to use the right hand back slap or strike on the right cheek.

Striking in the World of Jesus: reinterpreting "turn the other cheek" *cont'd*

- Walter Wink: "a backhand slap was the usual way of admonishing inferiors: masters backhand slaves; husbands backhand wives; parents backhand children; men backhand women; Romans backhand Jews, etc.
- The right backhand strike was purposely to inflict shame and humiliation on the one being struck – it was used to put an inferior in "his or her place."

Striking in the World of Jesus: reinterpreting "turn the other cheek" *cont'd*

- Imagine: what would the striker do if the one being struck gives his/her left cheek to be struck also?
- He could not use a left hand back slap; he could not use a right hand closed fist. He would be momentarily caught off-guard and did not know what to do. He is forced into a situation in which he could not inflict any more pain and suffering on the one being struck. He has been rendered powerless.

"Turn the Other Cheek": Power Relations in Society

- The practice of striking is about power dynamics in society. It is about people with power inflicting pain and shame on those who are deemed without power or less power in society.
- "Turn the other cheek" is about taking charge/control of a situation of power imbalance and transforming it into a situation which results in empowerment and freedom of the one being struck.

"Turn the Other Cheek": Power Relations in Society

- "Do not resist an evildoer" and "turn the other cheek" do not mean passive submission to evils and injustices being perpetrated.
- It is about active non-violent resistance, i.e. resistance in (a) non-violent way or ways.
- "Turn the other cheek" what Walter Wink calls Jesus' Third Way.

"Turn the other Cheek": Jesus's Third Way

2 most common ways to respond to a situation:

- Fight
- Flight

Jesus did/does not endorse both of these. He offers a third way:

- Active Non-Violent Engagement

Q & A, Group Work

- Questions, comments, clarifications, etc.
- Group Work: (*See separate paper*)

PowerPoint Presentation 6
God's Vision for Human Relationships

Analysis of Ephesians 5 v 15-31

Mutual Submission Between
Husband and Wife

Ephesian 5 verses 21b – 33

submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.
22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. 25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. 28 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, 30 because we are members of his body. 31 "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

Preliminary Comments

- Similar to the Genesis 2 creation narrative this Epistle passage has a degree of debate and controversy around it.
- Many, if not most churches, around the world including in Oceania use this passage (especially from verse 22 onward) to argue for one-way submission of wives to their husbands.
- New view: it is about mutual submission.

Household Codes: Ephesians 5:21 – 33

- **Cultural context:** male domination where the father was the ruler and head of a family (*pater-familias*). This predated Judaism & Christianity.
- Paul basically adopted the family structure of the pagan Hellenised Roman Empire, and "baptised" it with Christian aspects.
- **Broader context:** Ephesians is about God's new and redeemed community as the result of the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus.
- **Danger:** taking verse(s) out of context.

Household Codes – Wife & Husband Mutual Submission: Ephesians 5 verses 21 – 33

- Broader context *cont'd*: all Ephesians equally redeemed and blessed by God in Christ through whom there is oneness and unity between Jew and Gentile Christians, but predominantly Gentile church …
- Immediate context: chapter 5 – "Therefore, be imitators of Christ;" renounce former ways of life; discover the will of God – life that reflects the kingdom of God. Discuss what "imitators of Christ" means.
- Verses 15-20: describes the appropriate conduct in church worship and life, which includes …
- Verse 21, "submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ." Applies to all Christians.

Household Codes – Wife & Husband Mutual Submission: Ephesians 5 verses 21 – 33 *cont'd*

- Verse 21, "submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ" connects what comes before (conduct in church life & worship) and what comes next (conduct between wife & husband in the home) – transitional & combination verse.
- That is, mutual submission belongs both to church life and practice and to home life and practice. In other words, the appropriate conduct in church life and worship is to extend and be carried over into the home life. Not two different life-styles.
- Mutual submission is done "out of reverence for Christ."

Household Codes – Wife & Husband Mutual Submission: Ephesians 5 verses 21 – 33 *cont'd*

Instructions to wives:

- Comes in only 3 verses (21-23)
- Follows the dominant cultural practice of wifely submission **BUT** with a novel difference!
- Submission to the husband is "**as** to the Lord". Does not mean that husband is Lord. No!!!
- Analogy: Wife/Church and Husband/Christ.
- But as member of Church, husband (together with wife) submit to Christ and are, therefore, equals in Christ.
- **Discuss:** is the one-way wifely submission also practiced in your own culture, church tradition, etc?

Household Codes – Wife & Husband Mutual Submission: Ephesians 5 verses 21 – 33 *cont'd*

Instructions to Husbands:

- Come in 7 verses (24-30). Husbands are exhorted to love (Gk. *agapao*) their wives; such love is modelled upon:

✓ The ultimate selfless sacrifice of Christ (v.25)

✓ The servant-hood of Christ (v.26-27)

✓ The respectful and loving treatment by husbands of their own bodies (v.28-30)

- Paul then rests his case for mutual submission with reference to the Genesis 2 creation account where husband and wife "will become one flesh". "One flesh" is about equal humanity and dignity; it is about equal partnership, and presupposes mutual submission.

Household Codes – Wife & Husband Mutual Submission: Ephesians 5 verses 21 – 33 *cont'd*

- By the use of this analogy of Christ and his Church, Paul transforms the traditional Greco-Roman idea of the headship of a husband over his wife and the cultural expectation of a wife to submit passively to her husband's authority.
- A traditionally Greco-Roman vertical relationship shifts as both husband and wife become mutually subordinate to each other since both are baptised members of the body Christ. This is because of the equal dignity and status they both share as God's beloved children, each having been made holy and beautiful through the Servant Christ's washing them with his bath of water, i.e., baptism.

Household Codes – Wife & Husband Mutual Submission: Ephesians 5 verses 21 – 33 *cont'd*

- Paul re-contextualises and thereby reforms the relationship of husband & wife within the analogy of Christ and his Church. Christ's love is the love of "giving himself up" for the sake of his bride. Such love not only stoops down to serve her, but also highly esteems her and raises her status.
- Christ's headship is exercised in self-sacrificing service to his beloved bride. With Christ as the standard and model, a Christian husband is told to love his wife in the same way that Christ loves his Church.
- Furthermore, in the same way that Christ's headship is expressed in loving service to his beloved Church, so too, should a husband's headship be exercised in loving service to his beloved wife (i.e. wash his wife's feet!).
- Effectively, therefore, a husband is to serve his wife, which means to be subordinate to her and vice-versa.

Household Codes – Wife & Husband Mutual Submission: Ephesians 5 verses 21 – 33 *cont'd*

- In a roundabout and subtle kind of way Paul reaffirms the call for mutual submission he makes in verse 21. Paul uses the word "submission" in the Gk "middle voice" – neither active nor passive voice.
- This means that mutual submission is neither forced upon the wife by the husband nor forced upon the husband by the wife, but is given freely & willingly because of their reverence for Christ, and their love and respect for each other as equal members in the Body of Christ. ***Husband and wife relationship is a partnership of equals.***
- **Reflect: is this actually true and practiced in your context?**

Toward a New Beginning: Christ-likeness Today!

- Jesus taught and lived the new way of God's kingdom or God's reign – and this is the way we as followers of Jesus Christ today must live. Jesus shared our humanity and spoke of abundant life so any theology, ideology, belief, culture, etc. that denies a person her/his equal humanity and dignity, and diminishes or hinders abundant life isn't and can't be of God.
- As "Son of God" and "Son of Man" Jesus revealed more of God but he also demonstrated the capacity and potential of being truly human. To be Christ-like, then, is not so much to be more like God; rather, it is to move toward being more fully human as taught and demonstrated by Jesus. When a man sees a woman as his equal, and when a husband sees his wife as his equal – and vice versa – then he/she moves toward what it means to be fully/truly human and Christlike.

Q & A & Talanoa & Baere

- Questions, comments, etc.

Group Discussions:

- Group 1: Question ***i*** on page 33 & question ***1*** on page 35.
- Group 2: Question ***j*** on page 33 & question ***3*** on page 35.
- Group 3: Question **k** on page 33 & question ***4*** on page 35.
- Group 4: Questions ***5 & 7*** on page 35.

PowerPoint Presentation 7
God's Vision for Human Relationships

Analysis of 1 Peter 3:1-9

Myth of the 'Weaker Vessel'

1 Peter 3:1-9 – Wives and Husbands

3 Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that
even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without
a word by the conduct of their wives, [2] when they see your
respectful and pure conduct. [3] Do not let your adorning be
external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold
jewelry, or the clothing you wear— [4] but let your adorning be
the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty
of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very
precious. [5] For this is how the holy women who hoped in God
used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own
husbands, [6] as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And
you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything
that is frightening.

[7] Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding
way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since
they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your
prayers may not be hindered.

Cultural Background

- The cultural background in which Peter wrote was the same one in which Paul wrote his Epistles – male domination and rule.
- Peter borrowed prevailing cultural, socio-economic-political structures and practices and instituted them into the church. Examples:

a) Submission of the believers to the rule of the Emperor;
b) Submission of the slave to the master; and,
c) Submission of the wife to the husband.

Question: Emperor is no more and slavery has been abolished – why not one-way wifely submission? Why does this continue, or allowed to continue?

Cultural Background *cont'd*

- Peter was powerless to challenge these deeply rooted and established prevailing cultural, socio-economic and political structures and systems and justified (even defended) them by use of religion and theology.
- **World renown systematic theologian Jürgen Moltmann argued that very early on, "Christianity was already taken over by men and made to serve patriarchy."**
- All of this explains the language in which Peter wrote.

Preliminary Comments

- "Wives, be subject to your own husbands" (v.1) reveals to us the place and status of, and expectations upon, women in the world of Peter. It also tells us the type of society in which Peter lived and wrote.
- "For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord" (v.5-6a) reveals the status of, & expectations upon, women and type of society in OT Judaism.

Preliminary Comments *cont'd*

- 1 Peter 3:1-7, especially verse 7, is a key passage used to keep women down. The argument goes something like this:

Regardless of what you/we say or believe the word of God says that women are the weaker vessel. Because women are weaker, they are more vulnerable to deception and temptation. It is even more-so for a disable woman. There are so many things that they do not know and cannot deal with. They need the strong and godly authority of men to guard their hearts and spirits.

Woman *IS* Weaker Vessel?

- *Talanoa time ... reactions, comments, etc.*

Analysis of Verse 7

- Verse 7 is an exhortation given to "wives" to subject to their "own husbands". The text is about a marriage relationship, and is about how one particular man should relate to one particular woman. It is **NOT** an exhortation given to all men and all women in general. Thus it is a/the wrong interpretation to say that woman is the weaker vessel, or that all women are weaker vessels.

Analysis of Verse 7 *cont'd*

- The rightful attitude for a husband toward his wife is "in an understanding way, showing ***honor*** to the woman."
- The call is for the husband to be considerate, empathetic, kind, compassionate and caring. There is no room for the husband to control, dominate, abuse and violate the wife in any way – no room to belittle, oppress, suppress, or embarrass her.

Analysis of Verse 7 *cont'd*

- "showing ***honor*** to the woman." ***Honor*** is a term that expresses value, worth and respect.
- "Honor" and "vessel" connect with the biblical image and tradition of pottery and clay:

a) Israelites were compared with clay (vessel) and God with the potter (Jeremiah 18).

b) Believers are compared with clay (vessel) and God with the potter (Romans 9:20-13).

Analysis of Verse 7 *cont'd*

- In the tradition of pottery, the finer a piece of work the more precious and valuable it is. The honor given to the woman is because she is a vessel of honor, the work of the master potter and the image bearer of God.
- A husband is exhorted to treat his wife as valuable, precious and priceless. He is to treat her as more important than himself.
- *Question*: so why use "weaker vessel"?

Analysis of Verse 7 *cont'd*

- Most versions of the bible use the word "as" instead of "is". Very often this is ignored in order to push the ideological position that a wife is, or wives are, inferior to her husband/husbands. This is wrong!
- The Greek word that is translated here is *hos*, which is correctly translated into the English word "as" **NOT** "is". Small letters yet so significant for the correct interpretation!

Analysis of Verse 7 *cont'd*

- Take another passage where *hos* is used (Matthew 10:16) – "Behold, I am sending you out *as* sheep in the midst of wolves, so be *as* wise *as* serpents and innocent *as* doves."
- Jesus did not mean to say that the disciples should grow wool (like sheep) or feather (like doves) or have slithery skin (like snakes). Jesus used a figure of speech.
- "Woman *as* weaker vessel" is a figure of speech. Woman **IS NOT EQUIVALENT** to or with weaker vessel! On the contrary there is so much in life which shows and proves that woman is not weak!

Analysis of Verse 7 *cont'd*

- Reason for husbands to relate to their wives with understanding and honor is very clear: "since they are heirs with you of the grace of life." Wives are "heirs with you [husbands] of the grace of life."
- Wives are **NOT** inferior to their husbands: they receive God's grace in the same measure as their husbands; they are adopted as children of God just as their husbands; they share the same spirit as their husbands; they have God's imprint (image) just as their husbands.

Woman is NOT a Weaker Vessel!

- Questions, comments, etc.
- *Talanoa*:

a) Sharing of experiences;
b) How does, could, a husband "show honor" to his wife?
c) Wives and husbands are joint heirs "of the grace of life". Identify some hindrances for wives to enjoy this "grace [gift] of life." How might/could these hindrances be overcome?

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"Bridging the Gap Forum"

"Human Rights and Christian Theology: A View from Oceania"

(Note: This paper was originally written and delivered by Reverend Dr Cliff Bird at the "Bridging the Gap" forum which was held at the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat Conference Room, Suva, Fiji Islands, 12-13 May 2016. The full text is not edited).

Introduction

The theme of this 2 day forum is "Bridging the Gap: Gender Equality, Human Rights and Churches Learning and Sharing." Human rights, theology, the bible, churches – these are complex topics and it is impossible to deal with all of them in just a couple of days. Fortunately this is not what this forum is about. This forum is the start of a process of exploration: exploring together the resonances and linkages between these seemingly disparate topics of human rights and theology, human rights and the bible, and human rights and churches. It is about sharing with each other the work that we do, learning from each other and working with each other in order to better help those we seek to serve.

To provide us with some food for thought on this exploratory journey, I will speak on the topic "Human Rights and Christian Theology: A Reflection from

Oceania." Allow me to make a disclaimer: this is not intended to be an academic paper so references are minimal

Gap in Oceania?

Let me begin by posing two questions: is there a gap in the work for gender equality by various stakeholders? If yes, what is and where is this gap? Look around this room and we are from various sectors: non-government organisations, civil society organisations, regional organisations, churches and church organisations, regional ecumenical organisations, UN and EU agencies, and so on. In one way or other and to one degree or other we are all engaged in human rights work in the region. One demographic reality of all of the countries in Oceania, with the exception of Fiji, is that, on average 95% of people identify as Christian and belong within one church or other. Church participation and Christian belief play a prominent role in cultures and everyday life. For instance, the bible is taken and accepted with little question as *the Word of God*. While some theological institutions and very few churches come to the Bible from a more academic and, therefore, more analytical approach, the majority treat the Bible as sacred and come to it for insights and answers to almost every kind of issue, problem and challenge, or when

confronted with different kinds of situations in life. Such conservative and traditional view of the bible leads to its interpretations which are literalistic and un-contextual.

Against the backdrop sketched above, it is perhaps not surprising that churches and Christian communities throughout Oceania exhibit different levels of responses and attitudes to the work carried out by various non-religious human rights organisations and agencies. Generally speaking, churches show suspicion, fear, limited or no openness to dialogue, and even outright rejection, depending to a large degree on which human rights issues are being pursued and addressed. Being aware of the dangers of simplifying complex issues, I would nevertheless describe the gap and tension in the following way: non-religious human rights agencies and activists have the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the various UN Conventions and Declarations, while churches and Christians have the bible, Christian traditions and cultures. It is assumed that these two sides are not only inconsistent but are also incompatible and stand in opposition to each other.

But there is more to the tension. On the one hand human rights are seen by many ordinary Oceanic peoples as foreign, making universalistic claims in contextually disparate places around the world, overtly

individualistic, and unbiblical and unchristian. I will address some of these sentiments shortly when I discuss the Judeo-Christian tradition. On the other hand, some human rights organisations and agencies see churches and religions in general in negative ways: harbouring persons who perpetrate violence against women and children; condoning, perhaps even justifying violations of human rights within the family, community and church settings, through rituals of "forgive and forget" for instance. What is needed, in my opinion, is for us to recognise and affirm a common ground, which I will speak briefly about later.

The Human Rights Tradition and Purpose

The belief that everyone, by virtue of her or his humanity, is entitled to certain human rights is fairly new.[1] Its roots, however, lie in earlier traditions and documents of many cultures. In the interest of time, let me simply mention some of the significant milestones that go back more than two thousand years:

[1] See http://www.humanrights.com/what-are-human-rights/brief-history/cyrus-cylinder.html, cited 30/04/16

- The "Cyrus Cylinder" of 539 BCE, decreed by the Persian King, Cyrus, is sometimes described as the first charter of human rights;
- The "Magna Carta" or "Great Charter" which was signed by the King of England in 1215, and which marked a turning point in human rights;
- The "Petition of Rights" which was a statement of civil liberties produced by the British Parliament in 1628;
- The "Bill of Rights" of the Constitution of the USA which came into effect on 15 December 1751, amongst other things, protected the basic freedoms of citizens of the USA;
- The "Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen" in 1789 in France, which guaranteed the rights of "liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression."[2]
- The First Geneva Convention of 1864 which provided for the care of wounded soldiers;
- The establishment of the United Nations in 1945 whose ideal and primary purpose was stated in its preamble: "We the peoples of the United Nations are determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow

[2] *ibid*

to mankind." The horrors and atrocities of the two wars and the extermination of Jews during World War 2 propelled the post-war leaders and global community to work toward greater action;

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights which was adopted by the United Nations on 10 December 1948. In its preamble and in Article 1 the inherent rights of every human being is proclaimed: "Disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people...All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."

The reason for this brief historical overview of the human rights tradition is to highlight that both immediately and ultimately the goal and intention of human rights is the protection of individuals and groups from systems, institutions and structures; it is to discourage and even eliminate the baser or darker human tendencies in order to make human life fuller and more humane. The primary purpose of law in general and of human rights in particular aims to curb

selfishness, violence, abuse, ruthlessness and injustice, and to protect the interests and welfare of the vulnerable, the weak and the marginalized in society such as women, children, people living with disabilities, minority groups, and so on. However, a purely and narrowly legalistic understanding and application of human rights and human rights law have proven problematic across many parts of the world and this, too, has been the experience in Oceania. This observation is connected to a very important point which I would like to briefly talk about before I go on to highlight that the goals and purposes of human rights which I have just outlined have strong resonance with much in the Judeo-Christian tradition and teachings.

The historical and gradual growth of the human rights tradition did not happen in a vacuum. The language of rights did not exist in much of the earlier traditions. What were in existence were duties and responsibilities which people acquired and carried out by virtue of being part of a group – be it family, tribe or clan, community, religion, state, etc. It is necessary to stress here that a duty or responsibility carried out was recognition of, even reciprocal action to, some assumed or affirmed integrity and worth. For instance, the duty of care given by a parent or guardian to a child was recognition and affirmation that the child by nature needed care – food,

water, shelter, safety, love, etc. Or the responsibility of a group member to protect another in the same group was recognition and affirmation that the one protected was worth protecting. We could say that there was a correlation between duties and rights. This existential fact evolved into the idea of what was "natural", which the likes of St Augustine and later Thomas Aquinas, and others, developed into philosophies and theologies of "natural law" or "natural order". Reason or rationalism became perhaps the most influential approach to resolve many issues and challenges in society. Let me make some observations at this point:

- First, duties and responsibilities were not individualistic-oriented; rather they emerged within the context of larger groupings – families, communities, religious groups etc. These duties and responsibilities, which in effect recognised and affirmed the dignity of others to various degrees, existed for the welfare of members of such groups. I will add here that this is an important entry point for engagement between human rights and cultures and faith in Oceania.
- Second, reason or rationality became subservient to and justified the prevailing socio-economic, politico-cultural hierarchy – namely patriarchy – which had been in existence in ancient Mesopotamia long before the emergence of Judaism and much longer before Christianity came onto the scene.
- Third, and unfortunately in my opinion, a particular trajectory of the evolution of duties and responsibilities into "natural law' and "natural order" was unhelpful and dehumanising. This unfortunate development could be analysed in various ways but let me briefly highlight how it worked against women. The influential philosopher Aristotle (384-322BCE) was great in some ways but not so great in other ways. For example, he was not so great in that he developed a philosophical system which denigrated women and being female to low level humanity. According to Aristotle, a woman is an incomplete and damaged human being and is physically, intellectually and morally deficient. A woman is ruled by her emotions, appetites and bodily desires and that, it is natural for her to look after the home and nurture children. This philosophy was taken over and Christianised by theologians such as St Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, Karl Barth and many others in both early and later Christianity, and influenced Western theology

and biblical interpretations for almost two millennia. Unfortunately these were embedded in the Christianities which penetrated Oceania and became attached to receptor cultures which already held similar views about women. It was only around the middle and later half of the twentieth century that these theologies and interpretations were challenged.

What could be said of this is as Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel and Jürgen Moltmann point out, "Christianity was already taken over by men and made to serve patriarchy,"[3] quite early on. This need not be the situation today if theological analyses and biblical interpretations were done responsibly and in view of the common and shared humanity and dignity of every person. I will say it again that there is strong resonance between the Judeo-Christian traditions and human rights tradition.

- And fourth, the seminal documents which I highlighted above are about human rights, but only in general, and applied to all human persons equally. These were not gender oriented. It was only after World War II, and especially since the 1960s, when specific declarations and conventions were produced by the UN for specific target groups that were recognised and acknowledged as heavily discriminated against and whose human rights were violated, including: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979); Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989); Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993); Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006); Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), etc.

[3] Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel and Jürgen Moltmann, "Becoming Human in New Community," in Constance F. Parvey (ed.), *The Community of Women and Men in the Church* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1983), 31.

The Judeo-Christian Tradition

So what, exactly, are the resonance between the human rights tradition and Judeo-Christian tradition? Let me outline the following examples:

1) The Cyrus Cylinder which I mentioned earlier is based on the Old Testament record according to Ezra 1:1-4, known in Christian scripture as the Decree or Edict of King Cyrus. King Cyrus of ancient Persia (roughly present-day Iran), after

conquering the then ruling empire, Babylon (roughly present-day Iraq), decreed the release of prisoners of Babylon, freedom to worship, and freedom to live in peace and be provided space and support. This nearly 2600 years old decree has now been recognised as the world's first charter of human rights, and is translated into the six official languages of the United Nations;

2) Humankind is created in the image of God (*imago Dei*) according to Genesis 1:26-31. This theology of *imago Dei*, or created in the image of God, is central to Judeo-Christian tradition. *Imago Dei* (image of God) situates the presence of God in humankind (and in all creation, too) and this affirms the dignity and equality of humankind in and of itself, and yet at the same time situates such dignity beyond humankind to a greater Being. The UDHR stipulates the dignity and equality of all people. But there is more: by situating the dignity of humankind in God, this ancient text undergirds a further theological affirmation: human life is sacred. What all this means is that human dignity and equality ultimately are not given by any human person or culture or religion and, therefore, cannot be taken away by any human person, culture or religion. The UDHR speaks of the inalienability of human rights.

3) The spirit of the Old Testament tradition, especially the prophetic tradition, is clearly on the side of justice. The Judeo-Christian conviction is that God was and is concerned with liberating, sustaining, guiding, accompanying and empowering people who were and are being pushed to the margins. What we hear of God's concern for Israel, applies to all people who are left half dead on the sides of the roads of life. The following examples will suffice to illustrate this:

- In Exodus 3:7ff the LORD said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land ..." ***In retrospect we could perhaps say that this text is about the right to be free, the right to not be tortured, the right to food and drink, the right to safety, etc.***

- In Exodus 23:1-9 the Lord God established justice for all: "You shall not spread a false report. You shall not join hands with the wicked to act as a

malicious witness. You shall not follow a majority in wrongdoing; when you bear witness in a law-suit, you shall not side with the majority so as to pervert justice; nor shall you be partial to the poor in a lawsuit. When you come upon your enemy's ox or donkey going astray, you shall bring it back ... You shall not pervert the justice due to your poor in their lawsuits. Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent and those in the right ... You shall not oppress a resident alien ..." ***Perhaps you could take some time later and read human rights provisions retrospectively into this amazing ancient OT text.***

- In Amos chapter 5 God was not happy with the way the Israelites and their leaders lived because they did not administer justice, but instead engaged in harmful activities toward fellow Israelites, especially those considered inferior: "... you turn justice to wormwood, and bring righteousness to the ground ... Seek good and not evil ... and establish justice in the gates ... I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings, I will not accept them ... But let justice roll down like

waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." ***Again I will let you reflect upon this ancient text and think about how its language and contents is reflective of elements of human rights declarations and conventions.***

- In the book of Psalm 82:3 God spoke through the Psalmist's conscience: "Give justice to the weak and the fatherless [and motherless]; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute." ***In retrospect we could perhaps say that this text is about the right to justice, the right to be free from harm, the right to protection, the right to basic needs such as food and water and shelter, etc.***

- In the book of Proverbs 14:31 God spoke through King Solomon: "he who oppresses a poor man [and woman] insults his Maker, but he who is kind to the needy honours him." ***We could perhaps read the human rights tradition retrospectively and say that this text is about the right to justice, the right to be free from oppression, the right to food, water, shelter and honor/dignity.***

In the New Testament, particularly in the gospel narratives, the kingdom of God declared and practiced by Jesus Christ sets the new minimum standard and vision for human relationships. In the reign of God declared by Jesus every human person is welcome and affirmed and are equal. The gospels record that Jesus welcomed, accepted, liberated, affirmed, and empowered all those who were considered by society as inferior and were pushed to the margins.

Let me highlight how this is so, focussing specifically on the dignity and equality of women with men, and for the protection and care of children:

- First, women **ARE** affirmed, accepted, uplifted and empowered. Examples: widow of Nain whose life and future Jesus restored (Lk 7:11-17); an unnamed woman was given freedom and empowered by Jesus (Lk 7:36-50); Martha and Mary were both affirmed in what they did (Lk. 10:38-42); a crippled woman was restored to wholeness (Lk. 21:1-4); an unnamed woman caught in adultery was defended, liberated and empowered by Jesus (John 8:1-11); a Canaanite (Gentile) woman taught Jesus a major lesson, stood her ground and got her need attended to by Jesus (Matt. 15:21-28);

- Second, women **ARE** equal partners and participants in the work of God's reign: female disciples were an integral part of Jesus' team of disciples; Martha the sister of Mary was the first to declare Jesus as Christ; women disciples remained with Jesus at his death when all the men disciples deserted him; women were the first to discover the tomb was empty and the first to be told of the resurrection; Mary Magdalene was the first to be commissioned to proclaim the resurrection. Mary Magdalene later became known as 'Apostle to the Apostles."
- Third, women have the right to enjoy abundant life or life in its fullness equally with men: "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly," (John. 10:10). The promise and offer of this life was and is made to every human person without discrimination;
- Fourth, women are equal members of the Body of Christ (Galatians 3:28) – "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus";

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- Fifth, husband and wife are equal **AND** different in the family and are meant to live in mutual submission to each other (Ephesians 5:21-33);
- Sixth, the protection, care and nurture of children are a central part of Christian discipleship, or of what following Jesus means – not sides issues (Mark 8:22 – 10:52);
- And seventh, abuse of "little ones" is strongly condemned by Jesus: "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea," (Mark 9:42, ESV). For Jesus abuse of the "little ones" was and is a very serious offence and must be punished severely and accordingly.

Some Closing Remarks ...

Let me now make some closing remarks. I have tried to make the case for resonance and connections between the human rights tradition and the Judeo-Christian tradition. I hope that I have managed to do this, even if in a very small way – a small beginning is better than no beginning at all! Being quite hopeful for such a small beginning, and in view of us starting to explore together

possible new futures of working together for the benefit and welfare of all God's people, let me share with you some very preliminary thoughts. I know that you will have your thoughts as well!

Some thoughts for the churches:

- *First, re-read and reinterpret biblical texts: toward a hermeneutic of human dignity, equality, abundant life and sanctity of life*. There is urgent need to let go of hermeneutic which belittles human dignity, denies equality, hinders abundant life and desacralises life and to move toward hermeneutic which affirms, upholds and advances these non-negotiables.
- *Second, rethink and revise theologies and doctrines*: *toward theologies of human dignity and equality, abundant life and sanctity of life.* There is urgent need to sacrifice theologies and doctrines of unlife in favour of theologies and doctrines which affirm, uphold and advance these non-negotiables.
- *Third, rethink and review church structures and policies*: *toward structures and policies of inclusion and participation.* There is big and urgent need for churches to review their structures and policies in order to allow for more

inclusion and participation of women and youths in positions of leadership and authority and decision-making.

- *(And lastly, but not least), rethink and reform cultures: toward cultures of equal engagement, inclusion and participation.* The gospel of Jesus Christ must be allowed to not only affirm but also to critique and transform aspects of cultures in Oceania to allow for equal engagement, inclusion and participation by all.

Some thoughts for non-religious organisations and agencies:

- *First, reframe the language to reflect religio-cultural wisdom and values.* Language of human relatedness and belonging together is more easily accepted than using the phrase human rights such as *my rights*. From this perspective the allegedly individualistic claim of human rights is communicated as human relatedness and belonging, and as mutual recognition and affirmation between human beings. Speaking in such terms highlights rights not as individualistic but as relational, empathic and reciprocal. It also balances rights with duties and responsibilities. Relationships, empathy and reciprocity are core values in most religio-cultures in Oceania. The goal here is to enable and empower Christians and churches in the Pacific to affirm rights and responsibilities as anchored in these core values rather than viewing them as foreign cultural and ideological impositions.
- *Second, reframe the language and content to reflect theological-biblical foundations.* This may be easier said than done, but in order to improve working relationships with churches and Christian communities, it is important to reframe the language and content or substance of conversation in order to communicate and touch the faith foundations which they are familiar with, and can easily understand. Let me give a few examples:
  i. Phrases such as human dignity, human relatedness and belonging, and the sanctity of life are core theological-biblical convictions. But there is more!
  ii. Birthright is also deeply theological-biblical term. It is important to affirm that being human and to be treated as human is the birthright of every person regardless of

whatever distinctions and boundaries (real or perceived) there are.

iii. Created in the image and likeness of God is central. Every human being bears the image of God without discrimination or preference. To be created in the image and likeness of God is to share in the very life of God – the sanctity of life – and this applies to all human beings. Because God is relational, to be created in God's image is also to be relational and to exercise mutual recognition and affirmation of each other.

iv. Created equal by God. Human beings are created equal **AND** (not but) different.

v. Human freewill is given by God. God does not force or coerce people into doing things. Every person has the freewill to choose, to decide and so to take this freedom away from people is contrary to the image and intention of God. However, theologically the proper exercise of freewill is contingent upon, and perhaps even constrained by, the *imago Dei*.

vi. Inclusion and participation are central to the reign of God which Jesus declared and practiced. Women, children, destitute, people with disabilities and all those labelled as "sinners" were/are welcome in God's kingdom. There is no discrimination or segregation.

vii. Fullness of life is for all human beings, and it transcends a purely spiritualistic understanding. Fullness of life or abundant life includes: food, clean water, shelter, safety, education, meaningful work (just wages), freedom to make (informed) choices, inclusion and participation, health and even leisure time. Every human person is rightly entitled to these, and more.

Finally, some thoughts to all of us who are engaged in working for equality and dignity, and ending violence against women and children:

- Between us is the real hope to link and mobilise our particular strengths, resources, networks, etc. to achieve the common vision and goals which we all share. For instance I have seen many wonderful and very helpful resources produced and used by non-religious organisations and agencies, and increasingly we now have useful resources produced and used by the church sector: there is space for us to add value to the work we do.

Thank you very much for your attention and your time. *Vinaka vaka levu.*

United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948

United Nations (UN)

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Universal Declaration of Human Rights

United Nations

Note

Adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948
On December 10, 1948 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights the full text of which appears in the following pages. Following this historic act the Assembly called upon all Member countries to publicize the text of the Declaration and “to cause it to be disseminated, displayed, read and expounded principally in schools and other educational institutions, without distinction based on the political status of countries or territories.

Preamble

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people.

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, Therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and

all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1 12

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. 13

Article 2 14

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty. 15

Article 3 16

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person. 17

Article 4 18

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms. 19

Article 5 20

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. 21

Article 6 22

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law. 23

Article 7

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11

1. Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.

2. No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

2. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14

1. Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

2. This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15

1. Everyone has the right to a nationality.

2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16

1. Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

2. Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

3. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17

1. Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

2. No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21

1. Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

2. Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

3. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23

1. Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

2. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

3. Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

4. Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25

1. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-

being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

2. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27

1. Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

2. Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29

1. Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

2. In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

3. These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. 88

Article 30 89

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein. 90

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Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities

On March 25-28, 1997 the United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO), headquartered in Paris, held the first meeting of a Committee of philosophers representing a wide range of religious, ethnic, ethical and philosophical traditions to produce a Declaration providing a philosophical basis for a global ethic. At present there is only an initial tentative draft circulating among the Committee members.

Preamble
Whereas a fundamental distinguishing characteristic of human beings is that they alone never cease asking "why?"; they inevitably and unquenchably seek the meaning of things, and then strive to live accordingly,

Whereas humans are capable of knowing both particular things and general abstractions; because they can then consequently make comparisons, they also are capable of free, and therefore likewise responsible, choices,

Whereas because both the human search for meaning and the human ability fundamentally to make choices freely and responsibly are "in-finite," that is, their horizons stretch out endlessly, the dignity of the human being is correspondingly "in-finite",

Consequently these reflections on the human reality provide a reasonable basis for the affirmation by the UN 1948 "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" of "the dignity and worth of the human person",

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family - which is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world - presupposes and implies certain obligations or responsibilities,

Whereas the exclusive insistence on rights can result in self-opinionated and self-righteous attitudes,
Whereas neglect of responsibilities can lead to arbitrariness, lawlessness and chaos,

Whereas both the rule of law and human rights depend on the readiness of men and women to act justly, because rights without the corresponding commitment to responsibilities cannot long endure,

Whereas global problems such as poverty, underdevelopment, environmental pollution, population explosion, disease, crime, nuclear proliferation, corruption and fanaticism demand global solutions, and therefore ideas, values and norms valid across all cultures and societies,

Whereas all human beings, to the best of their knowledge and ability, are responsible for a better global order, which cannot be created or enforced by laws, prescriptions, and conventions alone,

Whereas the aspirations for progress and improvement of the human race on planet earth cannot be safeguarded without a minimal fundamental consensus concerning binding values, irrevocable standards, and fundamental ethical attitudes which apply to all human beings and institutions,

Now, therefore, the General Assembly,
Proclaims this "Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities" as a common standard of commitment by all peoples and all nations to the end that every individual and organ of society shall contribute to the authentic autonomy of every individual and the justified requirements of communities.

We hereby confirm and deepen on the level of an ethic of responsibility what has already been formally proclaimed on the level of rights, namely: the full realization of the intrinsic dignity of the human person, the inalienable freedom and equality in principle of all humans, solidarity with each other, and the interdependence of all sentient beings.

Consciousness of these responsibilities of individuals and institutions are to be founded by education and teaching as well as strengthened and promoted by progressive measures, national and international.
We further recognize that dialogue - i.e., conversation whose `primary' aim is to learn from the other - is a necessary means whereby women and men learn to respect the other, expand and deepen their understanding of the meaning of life, and develop an ever broadening consensus whereby men and women can live together on this globe in an authentically human manner.

Article 1
Every human being, regardless of social origin, sex, property, color, language, nationality or religion, ought to be treated humanely.

Article 2
All human beings should oppose all forms of inhumanity, especially fanaticism, hate, and social exclusion, and work for greater humaneness.

Article 3
No individual human or group of humans, including the state, social class, pressure group, police or military agency stands above the ethical dictates of good and evil. All should behave in a genuinely human fashion, that is: Do good and avoid evil.

Article 4
All human beings, endowed with reason and conscience, should act towards one another in a spirit of sisterhood/brotherhood. Therefore, there should be applied to all human beings, both individuals and groups, including among others families, communities, races, nations, and religions, the long-standing principle of so many ethical and religious traditions: What you do not wish done to yourself, do not do to others.

Article 5
Every human being is always to be treated as an end, never as a mere means, always as a subject of rights, never as a mere object, whether in business, politics, communication, scientific research or other areas of life.

Article 6
No one, except in the case of self-defense, has the right to injure or to kill. Every human being ought rather to have respect for life.

Article 7
Although every human person is infinitely precious and must be unconditionally protected, the lives of animals and plants which inhabit this planet with us likewise deserve protection, preservation, and care. That is, we humans are a part of nature, not apart from nature. Hence, as beings with the capacity of foresight we bear a special responsibility - especially with a view to future generations - for the air, water, and soil, that is, for the earth, and even the cosmos.

Article 8
Conflicts ought to be resolved without violence. This principle is valid for all institutions, especially states, as well as for individuals. Particularly public officials are obliged to work within a framework of a just order and to commit themselves, whenever possible, to non-violent, peaceful solutions.

Article 9
No one has the right to rob or dispossess in any way any person, group of persons, or the commonweal. Every human being ought rather to deal honestly and fairly.

Article 10
Property, limited or large, carries with it an obligation; ownership not only permits the personal use of property but also entails the responsibility to serve the common good.

Article 11
Economic and political power should not be misused as instruments of domination, but for service to humanity. Therefore mutual respect and the will to mediation should be fostered so as to reach a reasonable balance of interests in a sense of moderation and fairness.

Article 12
Wherever rulers repress the ruled, institutions threaten persons, or might oppresses right, human beings have not only the right but the responsibility to resist - whenever possible non-violently.

Article 13
No one should speak lies. Every human being ought rather to speak and act truthfully.

Article 14
The communications media, to whom the freedom to report for the sake of truth is entrusted and to whom the office of guardian granted, do not stand above ethics but have the obligation to respect human dignity, human rights, and fundamental values. They are duty-bound to objectivity, fairness, and humaneness. Hence, they have no right to intrude into individuals' private spheres, manipulate public opinion, or distort reality.

Article 15
Politicians, scientists and artists are doubly obliged, as individual persons and as society's leaders, to model ethical standards, and especially to serve truth.

Article 16
Religious persons, and especially religious leaders, whose religious freedom is guaranteed, ought to avoid prejudice, fanaticism and hatred towards those of different belief, let alone incite or legitimize religious wars. They rather should always be guides for truthfulness in thinking, speaking, and acting.

Article 17
All individuals and groups are obliged not to treat other persons as mere sex objects or disadvantage them because of their sexuality. Rather, men and women should treat each other in their sexual and kindred relationships with respect and as equal partners.

Article 18
Young people should learn at home, school, religion and elsewhere in society that sexuality in itself is a creative and positive - not a negative, destructive, or exploitative - force. As a life-affirming shaper of community, sexuality can be effective only when partners accept the responsibility of caring for one another's happiness.

Article 19
Marriage, which, despite its cultural and religious variety, should be characterized by love, loyalty, and permanence and guarantee mutual security and support.

Article 20
In the family, parents should not exploit children, nor children parents. Their relationship should reflect mutual respect, appreciation, and concern.

Article 21
The different professions and other societal groupings, such as medicine, business, journalism, among others, should develop current codes of ethics which will relate to the ethical principles of this Declaration by providing more specific guidelines.

Article 22
Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any state, group or person the right to engage in any activity aimed at the destruction of any of the rights, freedoms or responsibilities set forth in the 1948 UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights or subsequent UN documents.