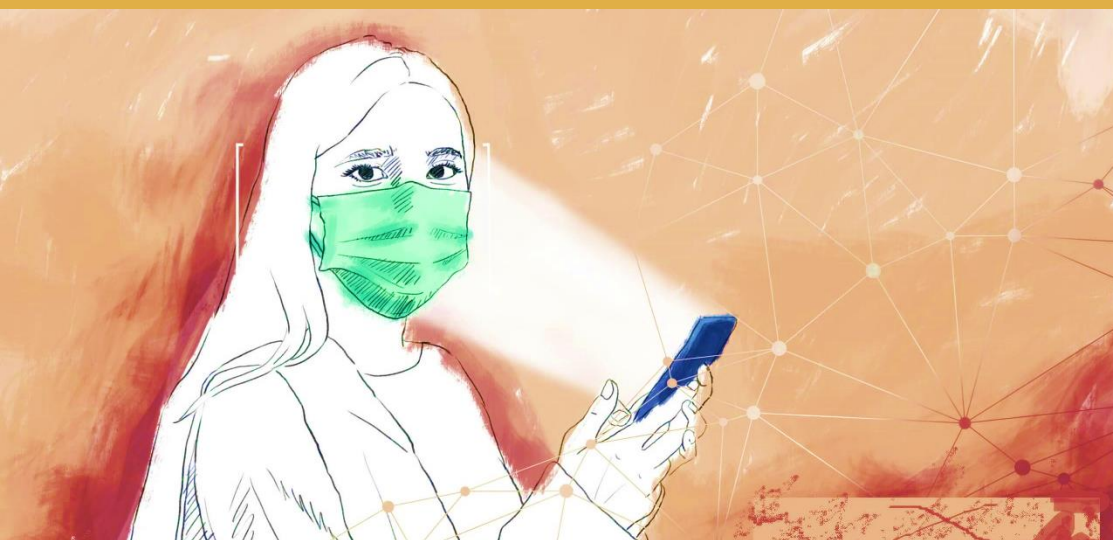




TRACI Reflections

Theological Research And
Communication Institute



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD: THOUGHTS TO PONDER

Even as the world celebrated the International Day of Girl Child on 11th of October here are a few compelling thoughts from some of our young friends pointing us to rethink on our approach to girls in our society.

“once again we were encouraged to create awareness on the issue of gender equality and amplify the voices of young girls around the world. However, before we pledge to empower young girls we must also recognize their worth. Otherwise, it remains as merely a duty one must oblige to be counted as a socially concerned citizen. I am reminded of the history of my home church (G.E.L. Church, Ranchi) when an orphan girl child Martha who was adopted became the first person to be baptized in the entire Chotanagpur plateau ...and how that incident would have brought about a change in people’s heart and mind....”

Jasmine Ankita Bage, Ranchi.

“The theme this year of “Digital generation. Our generation” ...is an issue less engaged with...Patriarchy continues to impede progress of women in education, work and daily life. A study by Council for Social Development on digital literacy in Manipur found that fewer females had access to or knowledge of digital devices compared to males.... Engaging with the issue of digital divide and education, given the case of my home town like Lamka in Manipur, would require an uncomfortable, closer but unique analysis of gender discrimination and bias prevalent in the community.”

Juliana Kimneilam, Manipur.

“A mother chiding her daughter oftentimes tends to remark that such behaviour would be inappropriate when she goes home, with her husband, several years later. For a young child, one can see how that would project her sense of identity within her own home. Selective treatment based on gender is a reality... we subconsciously steer our conversations and actions by. Idolising a husband is hugely imposed on young girls within the patriarchal constructs of Indian tradition and sadly confused by Christians to be an equivalent to God’s command to submit to the husband.”

Jannie Stephen, Chennai.

“....while great strides are being made for ‘Beti Bachao,’ not many answers have come for ‘beti ko kaise bachaye?’... “caged birds can never fly,” attempting to protect girls from the world would never empower them. Empowering is ensuring safe buses, and sidewalks, justice to victims of abuse, support and encouragement for their dreams, and most importantly treating them equally in every aspect, because they are made in the image of our God. Thus, instead of putting girls on the sidelines to protect them from the society, let us as families and communities encourage, support and stand with them as they move forward.”

Stuthi Lilian Joseph, New Delhi.

“As a working woman navigating through these changing times, these ‘special’ days most often go unnoticed. Yet, despite the challenges, I am constantly reminded of the little me looking up to women who seemed to have it all under control. Maybe things were not actually going fine for them, but they created a space for me, to dream, and believe that things could be achieved, despite my gender. For those women and for that space to dream, I am grateful, and I hope to continue to create a space for girls to dream, inspire them to be independent, despite what the changing dynamics that this world dictates!”

Monica Koshy, Mumbai



LIGHT LUGGAGE

(Reflection from TRACI Director)

When we overcome an unusual situation, we prefer to return to our pattern of behaviour and lifestyle which we are used to. Adversities help us realize and acknowledge the limitations of what we have accumulated. However, we easily forget this and **continue to accumulate even more sometimes even by making use of the adversities of people.** Although, we talk about the temporary nature of our possessions, we continue to focus on it. **We accumulate and carry all possible possessions wherever we go and it becomes part of our security, identity and pride.**

We panic and wrestle with God when we pass through difficult times in order to acquire and continue with everything at our own terms. During such times, we seek help from others as well. When our calculations don't work we get frustrated. However, when everything seems to be normal we would like to continue the same pattern, same life style and same standards as before. Most often our **understanding of the normal refers to the past**, which we think is the safe mode. There is a continuation of lip services, new vocabularies and extravagant celebrations. Some brag about their achievements and others are in a stage of loss and pain. **We carry the baggage of the past with new additions to protect and preserve these baggages.**

Arundhati Roy writes the following in her article, ***"The Pandemic is a Portal"***:

"It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next. We can choose to walk ...

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TRACI ONLINE COURSE: INTEGRAL MISSION

The first Online Training Programme by TRACI on **Integral Mission** got off to a great start with 36 participants from South & East Asia. The faculty, internationally renowned and the TRACI team, helped the participants look at the Biblical basis for Integral Mission. A study of the Church History up to the 21st century explored reasons why Church has many a time failed to be integral in its approach. Christian Ethics and practical applications for an integral perspective will further help participants prepare papers from their context. Just half way through the course it's encouraging to hear from some of the participants:

"One way in which the TRACI Integral Mission course has impacted me is in driving home the fact that mission starts not with me, or the organization I work with, or even with the church, but with God. I think this knowledge helps me see my life more holistically, instead of compartmentalizing it into "work" or "ministry" and "life", knowing that God is working on me as well. It is a privilege to learn and grow with so many Christians who are committed to thinking deeply about and living out their faith." - **Timandra, Sri Lanka (Focus)**.

"The TRACI course on integral mission has deepened my conviction particularly on the approach of integral mission. The thought-provoking questions encourage critical thinking and the assignments enable me to articulate my thoughts." - **Mila Mercado Bunker, Philippines (TearFund)**.

"Joining the Integral mission course is a paradigm shift for me. Being from a small town in Bihar, I have never been taught the importance of creation and caring for the creation. This course however has added another dimension of seeing and experiencing God's word and his mission in my life." - **Raj Kumar, New Delhi (Post-Graduate Student, JNU)**.

"This is the first time I heard about the term 'Integral Mission' itself. Yet this course has been shaping my understanding of the mission I have committed my life to. This course helped me to know more about the importance of every aspect of our life in carrying out the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ. I praise God for revealing to me more about the Mission through TRACI!" - **Kam Sawm Thang, Myanmar (MFES)**.

"This is the first theological course I've enrolled in, and it'll definitely impact the way I look at mission in our generation. I feel it will influence not just the Church and the worshipping community but will also oppose the dominant narratives in our society with regards to gender, caste, denomination and other walls we have erected." - **L. Thomas, New Delhi**.

"Integral Mission course offered by TRACI has really helped me to see the importance of the integral nature of our calling to partner with Jesus for holistic transformation. It has given me framework's to examine my own as well as my church's thoughts and actions in relation to mission." - **Madhu Thapa, Nepal (TearFund)**.

"I really appreciate TRACI for designing this course on Integral Mission as it is the basis for all the Christian leaders and ministers for their engagement. As a minister and a theological graduate, I am greatly privileged to be a part of this course. I would like to suggest TRACI to launch this course on a regular basis for many participants in Asia." - **Shampa Baroi, Bangladesh (TearFund)**.

... Light Luggage

through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, of avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world."

We need to seriously think and reflect on **'the way' Jesus has offered us** and make radical changes in all aspects of our life, both personal and corporate. We need to inculcate **the lifestyle on the basis of the values of the kingdom of God. An honest response to his invitation "Come to me...For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" will liberate us from the carcasses we drag.**

-**Mr. Mathew Varughese, Director, TRACI**

TRACI looks forward to your generous contribution to meet our rising needs. Our monthly budget is about ₹ 3,50,000/-. We are grateful to God for your gifts and appreciate your thoughtfulness.

DO LOOK FORWARD TO THE UPCOMING PROGRAMMES

- **November 27th 2021:** 'Climate Change & COP 26' Reuben Gergan & Isaac Gergan
- **December 11th 2021:** 'Freedom of Speech & Religion' Febin Mathew.

TRACI MONTHLY REFLECTIONS

(September-October 2021)

Whom has Education Failed During Lockdown?

Mr. Dexter Sam, lead Senior Manager at STiR Education, led the TRACI Reflection on the 25th of September, 2021. The reflection centered on the question "Whom has education failed during the lockdown?"

Sam's long involvement in the education sector enriched the session with a close reading of the impact of the pandemic amidst changing policy reforms. He reflected upon conditions ailing the education system in the country, explored ideas towards addressing the needs of families and students and provided insights on possible interventions.

Considering this context of inequality he encouraged the Church to engage with communities with a "heart of justice" and to harness the network potential of the Christian fraternity in its missional work. There is a need, Dexter suggests, for the community to work with governments to achieve "God's heart for education."

Understanding and Responding to Job Loss during the Pandemic: Where do we stand?

TRACI's October Reflection took place on the 23rd of the month. The speaker at the session was Ms. Benita Paul who presented a paper on "Understanding and Responding to Job Loss during the Pandemic: Where do we stand?" Benita, who is Head of Marketing and Business Development at SIG Combibloc, provided a detailed and in depth analysis of the impact of COVID-19 induced unemployment trends in India. It's reason and consequences included changing consumer trends, increasing demand for automation and a legacy of bad governance in India.

The session was followed by responses from Rev. John Simeon, Mr. Sanjiv Ailawadi Mr. Cherian Thomas, and Mr. George Thomas who presented insights and experiences of their engagement from their organisations and communities. The session challenged the Church continue to identify response mechanisms to the afflicted by the pandemic and otherwise, in ways that will touch those we reach.

All Reflection papers are available on:
<https://traci.in/christian-mind-series/>

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FOREIGN CONTRIBUTION ACCOUNT

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