Culture, Church, Disabilities and Marginalization

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Introduction

Millions of people are pushed to the margins due to injustice. Ableism,[1] ageism, patriarchy, racism, clanism, tribalism, casteism, classism and materialism are unjust institutions and structures that perpetuate, disenfranchise and dehumanize person with disability,[2] indigenous people, women, Dalits as they do not fit into the normative scheme of dominant powers. They are looked down upon as inferior, incapable, self-imposed, and that they are poor because they are sinners, lazy, not smart and lack intellectual capacity. Persons with disabilities suffer most in the church and society due to ableism.

Theological reflection from the perspective of persons with disabilities is almost silent in all our theological discourses. Persons with disabilities whose voices were never heard in the church, and whose experiences were never considered in doing theology, are raising new theological questions: Are we not created in the `Image of God'? Is our disability a curse from God? Is our physical impairment the result of our parent's sin? Or, is our disability due to our personal sin? Are we sinners? Why are we excluded from the church which is for all? Why are we not given responsible position in the society? Why do people look upon us as inferior? How can/do we contribute our gifts to the life of the church and society when we are not given any space? All these questions and many more are crucial to Christian theology. Our church will remain incomplete without addressing those issues and concerns; our society is incomplete without recognition of the gifts of

persons with disabilities. It demands a new way of reading the Bible, doing theology and ministerial practice.

Persons with Disabilities in Society

It is said that about 10% of the human population has some deformity or other, yet they seldom receive any attention. In many societies, persons with disabilities are treated as second-class people, objects-of-charity or even abandoned. They are subjected to prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory acts by the able-bodied majority and they do not exercise and enjoy the same basic rights as their non-disabled counterparts. In the context of economic competition, the persons with disabilities experience more discrimination in employment opportunity because employers in both public and private sectors regard them as weak, helpless and incompetent to perform. The persons with disabilities are usually the first to be discharged and the last to be hired in any form of employment.

There is also a close linkage between poverty and disability - disability causes poverty and poverty causes disability. Persons with disabilities constitute a disproportionate number of the poor in the developing countries. 97% of children with disabilities who live in the developing world do not have any form of rehabilitation and 98% do not receive any education, and majority of them come from the rural places.

In many families, persons with disabilities are not given due respect. Even if the person is the eldest in the family, if he/she has disability, he/she will not be allowed to involve in the decision making processes of the family. This is linked to the belief that people with disabilities are inadvertently mentally disabled and therefore unable to make right decisions. Such attitudes create division in the family and it is an outright violation of a basic human right of the persons with disabilities. It undermines the persons' intelligence as well. Some of the common and obvious cultural discriminations experienced by persons with disabilities in society include:

a) **Inheritance** - Disabled persons cannot inherit properties of their parents. A disabled person would not be considered when a family gives a share of land to the children especially the male members. In other words, the disabled person is not entitled to any immovable property rights.

b) **Stigmatization** - Disability connected to superstitions culminates in stigmatization. They are looked upon as inferior, sinners or impure/imperfect beings.

c) **Infanticide** – In some societies, children with disabilities are being killed on the ground that they are being possessed by the evil spirit and to protect family's prestige/status.

d) **Abandonment** – In some cases, children with disabilities are abandoned simply on the grounds of keeping away `the curse', or stigma.

e) **Confinement** - Often as a means of hiding what is perceived to be a disgraceful aspect in the family, a disabled child is kept in seclusion from those who visit the family.

f) **Illiteracy** - Persons with disabilities are not given equal treatment in accessing the right to education. Able people have a notion that disabled children are not capable of articulating ideas.

g) **Disease** – Due to lack or denial of adequate treatment many people with disabilities are left to die from disease as a means of getting rid of the "handicap" in the family.

h) **Denial** – They are denied political, economic and educational rights. Some churches have even denied ordination of the disabled on the ground that a disabled minister may distract others whom he/she is supposed to serve.

Cultural Beliefs and Disability

Among many societies, there is a strong belief that nothing just happens, but that bad things or unfortunate events are caused by evil spirits and good things are the result of the blessings from good spirits. If something happens in one's life e.g. serious suffering, death, accident, disability, even death of an animal or a poor harvest, people always considered this as a consequence of bad action, e.g. killing of animals while one's wife is pregnant, giving false witness on land matters, killing of innocent person, telling lies, violation of religious observance, violation of restricted days, taboos, etc. Some societies see disability as a result of children conceived out of incest or wedlock, or an expectant woman doing certain practices that are taboo (e.g. eating certain fish or eating cat, tiger meat, etc.), having sex outside marriage;

killing animals, and laughing at a person with disability. Others believe that failure to respect and appease ancestors' spirit results in disability. `Blindness', `crippled', `still born', `mental imbalance', `demon possession', etc. are associated with those evil practices. If such a person is given a place in the community, the whole village community is affected. Thus, society does not give any opportunity for disabled people to live a normal life even though they can do many things as normal persons. Even today persons with disabilities are not taken in political matters or are not allowed to be involved in religious matters. In some contexts, they are not even allowed to speak in public.

In many societies, having a disabled child in the family is seen as a bad omen. A child born with disability or accidental disability is often viewed with suspicion, as it is seen as associated with the wrongs committed by parents or grandparents against God, the gods or ancestral spirits. Efforts to trace the wrong doer often leads to blame spouses, usually a man accuses the woman. In some societies, the presence of disability at birth was often considered to be reflective of a broken relationship between the family and God. Often "the child was killed and sent back to God so that the Creator God might send another child without disability. Such children were killed with the full approval of the community and the question of infanticide never arose."[3]

Such understanding and practices still dominates many societies. Unfortunately, culture colludes with wrong interpretation of scripture, the living condition of people with disabilities suffers many forms of discrimination and isolation in society. Let us see how abled people construct of theology that brings exclusion and marginalization to persons with disabilities.

Marginalization and Theology

Misconception of God

Theology is God-talk, discourse on God. We construct images of God metaphorically shaped by our culture. Hebrew and Greek thought provided foundations and philosophical resources for construction of Christian theology. We see God hierarchically and dualistically where God is perceived as impassable – beyond change, who is incomprehensible being, omnipotent, omniscient, or omnipresent and Holy of Holies who dwells above in heaven. Within this framework, able bodied-people formulate patriarchal, success, beauty and perfect-

oriented images of God like the male Ruler, Lord, King, Almighty, Father, Master and Warrior. Though God is merciful, loving, compassionate, a comforter, and liberator who shares in our sufferings, we tend to over-emphasize the triumphalistic images of God. K.C. Abraham says that "all these images are constructs of abled people for the abled people."[4] This consciously or unconsciously promotes the following views of Christian life:

a) Prosperity, good health, healing, success are seen as blessings from God to be celebrated. Physical disabilities, sickness like HIV and cancer, poverty and failure in life are seen as punishment and curse from God.

b) We tend to promote a transcendental, holy nature of God who does not come in contact with the world and accepts only the perfect, unblemished ones. Persons with disabilities are distorted images of God, imperfect, unclean, unholy and sinners who therefore, should not be allowed in the temple service; their presence defiles the holy place. In the name of maintaining holiness and sacredness, we exclude, discriminate and deny opportunities to persons with disabilities, women and persons infected by disease like leprosy (and today HIV). Such discriminatory attitudes and practices are sin.

c) We conceive God as an all-powerful 'super-magician'. Everything is possible, if we have faith in God. God has the power to heal even terminal disease like cancer and raise people from death. Yes, God is all powerful and there is nothing impossible for him. We need to pray for each other for God's mercy and healing. But the danger is that those who are not healed are considered faithless, and branded as sinners. We often think that persons with disabilities are sick; we want to heal them from their disabilities. But did Jesus heal all the sick people during his ministry? Did he raise all the dead during his ministry? No, Jesus did not. It was not the intention of Jesus. Jesus himself suffered pain and died on the cross. Suffering and death is part of God's structure of creation. No human person can escape death and suffering. Even the innocent suffer, e.g. Job. This expectation of God's `super-magic' healing, leads to the belief that our prayers are not answered due to lack of faith. This brings more pain, anxiety

and psychological crisis to people who already experience physical pain and suffering in life. People die, or suffer not because of sin, or punishment from God; it is the will of God. If we narrowly interpret healing-faith in terms of miraculous 'CURE' alone, then we are misreading the biblical teaching. Such one-sided interpretations of God's work will reinforce denial and stigmatization to persons with disabilities.

d) This view of God and reality of life negates the body. The soul is the highest aspect of a human person which finds its true destiny by escaping from this perishable body and world. So, why should we care for the body? Why should we care for people with disabilities or people living with HIV? We do not have to worry for the body as it is temporal and perishable.

Such construct of God contradicts the true message of the Scripture. The Bible affirms that God became flesh; became Immanuel. Jesus is the incarnation of God and gave his life for the downtrodden people. In Jesus, we find fullness of life.

Misconception of Sin and Disability

An important biblical insight that has influenced the life and church is the doctrine of sin and creation of humanity. The presence of persons with physical impairment in society created much debate in church especially on the question of perfect God, imperfect creation and the consequence of sin etc. Two positions of the church may be cited here to show the interconnection between marginalization, disability and sin.

a) *Disability as Consequence of Sin: A Source of Exclusion* - The concept of sin is differently used in Christian circles. Some theologians speak of `missing the mark' of God's purpose in life; others speak of `dethroning God and enthroning self at the centre of one's life' etc. But the most crucial issue is: how does the Christian understanding of sin affect the lives of persons with disabilities? A dominant view of physical impairment was that it is the consequence of sin. Even today majority of Christians would say that it is the consequence of sin, punishment from God and a curse to the family. This belief is further re-imposed by the doctrine of rebirth[5] (*karma samsara*) in Hinduism and Buddhism, and Primal religious belief in evil spirits.[6] This wrong interpretation of disability linking it to sin has caused much damage

to persons who live as healthy persons with disabilities. It has become a source of exclusion in society. Classical theologians regarded the "Original Sin" as the universal and hereditary sinfulness of humans since the Fall of humans. It is accepted that since all human beings are the descendants of the first couples: Adam and Eve, they all inherited the sin of their parents and then all become sinners. Augustine taught that the Original Sin is transmitted through sexual act. The Original Sin has distorted God's perfect order of creation, the consequence of which is imperfect order of creation. Since imperfect creation is the result of sin, they do not come under the scheme of God's grace. It is a direct consequence of sin and the work of demons: it is a curse and punishment from God. Though the offence the persons with disabilities commit is relatively insignificant and most often they are not even conscious of their so-called misdeeds, many abled people take it for granted that their disability is a manifestation of their own personal or parents' sin in the past or in this present life. To this day such understanding still persists. Unfortunately, the church also had not woken up to the fact that discrimination, prejudice and exclusion meted out to persons with disability that have serious consequence in their lives is not considered as sin, rather sin is defined only in terms of smoking, drinking, or going to movies on Sunday. We do not recognize corruption, manipulation and abuse of power in public life as sin. Belittling and neglecting persons with disability is a more serious sin. There are sufficient proofs that Christian theology of (the Original) sin is the root of the denial and exclusion of persons with disabilities in society and church. It gives justification to escape from institutionalized form of social evil. Physical impairment as the work of demons and the consequence of sin has deprived persons with disabilities in church and public life. This wrong notion of the traditional view of sin has not only neglected people's real life situations, but also affirms the oppressive context that does not give direction for transformation of life. In other worlds, this wrong understanding has contributed to exclusion of persons with disabilities from an active involvement in the spiritual, social and developmental life of the church.

b) *Sin and Image of God* - Throughout the centuries, the churches have never acknowledged that persons with disabilities are created in the image of God. Some theologians exclude them by interpreting `the image of God' in terms of `perfection' – perfection which was understood in terms of physical and mental endowment. There is no

beauty in the disabled. Any form of disability makes a person less than human – they are not created in the image of God. Some understood this in terms of `rationality'. Persons who cannot articulate do not represent God's image. Some interpretations even focus on the exercise of power. God created humans to exercise power and have dominion over the rest of creation, a capacity into which God invites humans to participate. Since persons with disabilities are not capable of exercising power, they do not reflect God's image. Others interpreted this in relation to the human capacity for creativity and freedom. Since persons with disabilities cannot exercise creativity and freedom fully, they cannot be counted as full `being'.[7] These are all able-people's interpretations and they do not respect life especially of those who live a healthy life endowed with variety of gifts despite physical impairments. Disagreeing with the dominant Christian interpretations, Gordon Cowans argued that none of the above formulations sufficiently takes into account the experience of disability, particularly the experiences of persons born with impairments. Many persons are born with impairments which inhibit their capacity to engage and interact with their environment in the same way as others.[8]

The dominant interpretations of sin and the image of God justified extermination of people born with physical impairments. Killing, apart from "imperfect beings" like persons with disabilities, of any person is considered as sin, because the human person is precious, created by God in his own image. The Reformers who held deliberate discharge of semen as a crime were negative towards persons with disabilities. *Onan* deserved to die, (Gen. 38:8-10) taught Calvin, for the crime of the unproductive discharge of semen. Deliberate spilling of semen outside of intercourse between a man and a woman was considered a crime worthy of death.[9] But in the case of persons with disabilities, Luther and Calvin held them in contempt and justified their removal from society by death as "an act well-pleasing to God".[10] A person with disabilities represents a distorted image of God and so they are sub-human, hence it is not considered as sin or crime to kill a disabled person.

Discrimination, denial, and exclusion at homes, churches and society is rooted on this understanding of God's structure of creation. It perpetuates people to treat disabled people as inferior not only with respect to their specific physical limitations, but also to their "total

being". They are treated like second-class people, objects-of-charity or even abandoned. Some parents do not give them adequate food, medical treatment and some of them never take them out of their homes. Their presence is considered as a shame, disgrace and burden, but never as a precious gift. Society makes them absolutely dependent by denying privileges and opportunities in all sectors, including the church. This is sin and it contradicts the Kingdom values.

Misconception of Suffering and Disability

We often assume that suffering such as unexpected illness, death of a loved one, accident, loss of job etc. are punishment from God, When the tragic disease and death happen to us, we ask why God, why me? When a child is born with physical impairment, we ask why God? We often think that it is the result of some mistake we committed. Job strongly rejected the idea that suffering is God's punishment and that our suffering is caused by our own personal sins. Jesus also refuted the idea. Jesus opposed making people suffer by unjust system and practices. Nancy L. Eiesland criticized the idea of virtuous suffering and that physical impairments were a sign of divine election. Such idea gives a notion that "disability is a temporary affliction that must be endured to gain heavenly rewards."[11] She wrote:

> The biblical support of virtuous suffering has been a subtle, but particularly dangerous theology for persons with disabilities. Used to promote adjustment to unjust social situations and to sanction acceptance of isolation among persons with disabilities, it has encouraged our passivity and resignation and has institutionalized depression as an appropriate response to `divine testing'. Viewing suffering as means of purification and of gaining spiritual merit not only promotes the link between sin and disability but also implies that those who never experience a "cure" continue to harbor sin in their lives. Similar to the practice of emphasizing self-sacrifice to women, the theology of virtuous suffering has encouraged persons with disabilities to acquiesce to social barriers as a sign of obedience to God and to internalize second-class status inside and outside the church.[12]

The idea of virtuous suffering encourages passivity that whatever happens is the will of God and that compromise with an unjust system

is natural. The idea of virtuous suffering blinds our eyes to see injustice and ignore people who try to struggle for change. The experience of suffering should thus lead us to fight for justice and dignity.

Misinterpretation of Temple service

The scripture passage like Lev. 21:16-24 is often interpreted to justify exclusion of persons with disabilities from Christian ministry. It reads:

> 16 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 17 Speak to Aaron and say: No one of your offspring throughout their generations who has a blemish may approach to offer the food of his God. 18 For no one who has a blemish shall draw near, one who is blind or lame, or one who has a mutilated face or a limb too long, 19 or one who has a broken foot or a broken hand, 20 or a hunchback, or a dwarf, or a man with a blemish in his eyes or an itching disease or scabs or crushed testicles. 21 No descendant of Aaron the priest who has a blemish shall come near to offer the LORD's offerings by fire; since he has a blemish, he shall not come near to offer the food of his God. 22 He may eat the food of his God, of the most holy as well as of the holy. 23 But he shall not come near the curtain or approach the altar, because he has a blemish, that he may not profane my sanctuaries; for I am the LORD; I sanctify them. 24 Thus Moses spoke to Aaron and to his sons and to all the people of Israel. (NRSV)

Affirming the holiness doctrine, the Church assumed that "blemish" recorded in Leviticus speaks about exclusion of persons with disabilities and women from temple service. The Jews believed that disability is a sign of sinfulness and women's menstrual period is unclean and unholy. Does this text really suggest disqualification and exclusion of disabled people from the temple service? Walis Ukan,[13] an OT scholar, refuted this misinterpretation. He underlined three arguments: The text is speaking about

(i) *To relieve but not to exclude* - According to the Jewish practice of offering, the priest had to offer two bullocks, one ram, seven male lambs without blemish and a lamb as a burnt offering for God. In addition, some grains, oil and wine had to be offered as offerings (*minchah*) daily. It involves laborious and arduous duty. Every day and night, the priest had to make offering of animals, smoke flesh and incents and the fire of altar is kept by the priest. Indeed, it was a

laborious and arduous work. God's commandment to Moses, "No of your off springs come near to offer the food of his God," (v. 21) needs to be seen in terms of "the laborious and arduous process of ritual".[14] A disabled priest could not undertake this hard duty. This verse does not imply denial or exclusion of the disabled person from serving God. On the contrary, it demands from the abled priest to give physical relief to the disabled priest from the daily laborious duty.[15]

(ii) *To support but not to discriminate* - After commanding disabled priests to be relieved from laborious duty, it says, "the food of his God, from the most holy and the holy, he shall eat." (v. 22).This has a profound social and religious meaning. It also expresses God's abundant richness and grace upon disabled person. This affirms inclusion and support of the disabled person, and the abled people should offer them the resources they need to lead a dignified and good life. The challenge is that we need to create a social, religious and cultural system that support disabled people.[16] Though disabled priests could not perform the duty of offering, they still deserved the portion of the food of God that is the most holy of holy, just as the normal priest enjoyed. They deserved the welfare and rights regardless of their disabilities. They should not be socially or religiously excluded or marginalization just because they are disabled. They are not to be excluded from the family of priest. Instead, they are active member of the family of priest. Hence, to work for a social, political, religious and cultural support system and network is what God demands from us today.

(iii) *To honour but not to marginalize* - "Because I am the Lord who sanctify them" (v 24) gives a new perception of disability. It challenges the traditional stereotyped understanding that disability is manifestation of sin and they are cursed and hated by God. This verse clearly affirms that there is no room of contempt, discredit or marginalization of disabled priest. God says, "I am the Lord who sanctify them." The passage is reaffirmation that persons with disabilities are created in God's own image.[17] Disability should not be the reason to exclude them from ministry. Every disabled person deserves acceptance and entry into the Kingdom of God. In the eyes of God, the disabled priest is also sanctified by God. In God's Kingdom, Walis Ukan concluded that

> The disabled deserves the dignity and respect just as normal people do. God demands us to establish a friendly, just and

> life-affirming society and environment for the disabled. It is our collective responsibility to create a just and inclusive church and society so that broken and anguished hearts will experience love, care and acceptance in God's Kingdom.[18]

Jesus and Disability

Jesus brought people with disability, the poor and the ones rejected by society into the centre of God's Kingdom. All human beings are precious, valuable and they must be respected. Jesus challenged discriminatory practices and the callous attitude of abled rich people. Those who were discriminated, excluded, ostracized, rejected on the basis of disease and disability were challenged by Jesus. For instance, Jesus' act of healing of a shriveled man on the Sabbath (Mark 3:1-12) was a challenge to Jewish leaders. They did not want the shriveled man to be healed in the Synagogue on the Sabbath because for them the observance of Sabbath was more important than saving a life. They were afraid that this man would enter the Synagogue with the ailment which would defile the holy place. Religious rituals, laws and finding fault were more important than saving a life. But for Jesus, life was more important. Jesus broke the religious rituals. Against their ritualism, Jesus said, "The Sabbath was made for humankind and not humankind for the Sabbath". Jesus healed that person in spite of all the religious restrictions and the fact that the Pharisees were watching him. In Jesus' view, care and healing is of prime importance than religious practices.[19] Jesus stood for the cause of the sick and disabled. He defended them against the prevailing attitude that suffering and physical impairment is due to sin. Jesus rather reached out and touched them to bring healing to the sick and disabled. He not only healed them of their physical infirmities but also restored them to their rightful place in the society. Because of his compassionate love for the disabled and sick, Jesus did not hesitate to break the Sabbath law (Mk 3:1-6). Jesus' whole motive behind his healing ministry was not to present himself as a kind of healer or super-magician but his aim was to start a movement of hope for the hopeless; a movement from being nobody to being somebody. On encountering Jesus, the sick and disabled experienced the worth and dignity of life. In the Kingdom of God there is nothing such as unclean or sinner that cannot be made clean again.[20]

We can imagine what Jesus would do for persons with disability today in our church and society. Jesus would not take the road of denial,

discrimination, ostracization and isolation.[21] He would be there with them to bring healing, hope and restoration to the community just as he did on many occasions. Jesus would certainly condemn the Pharisaic attitude of the abled people. Therefore, it is not our duty to pass judgment and undermine them, but accept those with disability the way they are and minister to them with compassion, open-hearted acceptance, love and care. We should allow them to grow and contribute their gifts to the church and society. The stigmatization of people with disability calls the Church to ask what it means, in our time, to be the inclusive community that Jesus envisioned and so proclaimed. As a community of disciples of Jesus Christ, the Church should be a sanctuary, a safe place, a refuge, a shelter for the stigmatized and the excluded. The disciples of Jesus are thus called to work for a church of all and for all.

Celebration of God's Gifts

The Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network (EDAN) has drawn our attention to the fact that without inclusion of the gifts of persons with disabilities, we cannot talk about the unity of the church. There is no unity of the churches without acknowledging the gifts of persons with disability. All people with or without disabilities are created in the image of God and called to an inclusive community in which they are empowered to use their gifts. In fact, the world will be poorer without the contribution of persons with disabilities. Jesus protected, forgave, loved and cared for them. Jesus strongly disputed the connection between sin and blindness, saying "It was not that this man sinned or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him" (John 9:3). Jesus challenged the Jewish's understanding that God punishes sinners by blinding them or their animals (Ex. 4:11). So there is no room for exclusion of persons with disabilities in the church.

We need to affirm that diversity is an integral part of God's creation. Society - from its most basic unit (the family) to its broader forms (the church and the community) - has to be a place where everyone, regardless of gifts and abilities, is genuinely welcomed, given every opportunity to participate meaningfully and nurtured toward fulfillment. We need to work together more rigorously so that our common vision for the establishment of an inclusive, affirming and empowering global society may be realized. Let us strive to create a society and church where everyone, regardless of gifts and ability, is genuinely included or else our churches will remain disabled communities without the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Endnotes

[1] Imposition of social, cultural and religious norms developed by the able people as normative for disabled people.

[2] Disability is a condition that hampers, impedes or prevents a person from performing normal activities which include caring for oneself, doing manual tasks, walking, seeing, standing, hearing, speaking, learning and working.

[3] Samuel Kabue, "Introduction of EDAN & Disability Discourse in Theological Education" a paper presented at "Disability Studies Resource Material Writer's Workshop" from 24-28 June 2008 at Mombasa, Kenya, p. 4.

[4] K.C. Abraham, "Theological Reflections on the Experience of the Disabled," in *Doing Theology from Disability Perspective, eds*. Wati Longchar & Cordon Cowans (Manila: ATESEA, reprint, 2011), p.169.

[5] The doctrine of rebirth teaches the cyclical process of life. The condition of the present life is determined by our past deeds. Disability is a product of past misdeeds and we can do nothing about it.

[6] The traditional primal religion strongly advocates that "bad things are caused by the evil spirits and good things are the result of the blessing of benevolent spirits".

[7] Gordon Cowans, "Towards a Liberatory Theology of Disability; Humanity in Creation, Disability and the Image of God," in *Disabled God Amidst Broken People: Doing Theology from Disability Perspective*, ed. by Wati Longchar and Gordon Cowans, (Manila: ATESEA, 2007), pp.47-48.

[8] *Ibid*., p. 48.

[9] Cited by Adrian Thatcher, "The Virus and the Bible-How Living with HIV helps the Church to read it," a paper presented at workshop on "Ethics on HIV & AIDS Prevention," at on 8th January, 2008 at Johannesburg, p. 5.

[10] Cited by Adrian Thatcher, p. 6.

[11] Nancy L. Eiesland, *The Disabled God: Towards a Liberatory Theology of Disability* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), p. 72.

[12] *Ibid*. p. 72-73.

[13] Walis Ukan, a Bible study on "Misleading Text to Disability" (Lev. 21:16-24 and Mark 9:43-47) at Asia-Pacific Consultation on "A Just And Life-Affirming Church & Society: Person With Disability Perspective" at The Yushan Theological College & Seminary, Hualien, Taiwan, December 11-14, 2016.

[14] *Ibid*, p. 3.

[15] *Ibid*.

[16] *Ibid*.. p. 4.

[17] *Ibid*., p. 5.

[18] *Ibid*., p. 6

[19] Razouselie Laseto, "Jesus and Disease: A Search for a Place for HIV & AIDS in Jesus' Approach to Human Disease," in *Health and Life: Theological Reflections on HIV & AIDS*, ed. RazouselieLasetso (Jorhat: ETC Programme Coordination, 2007), p. 37, see also V. J. John, V.J. John, "Biblical Approach to Understanding HIV *& A*IDS: Some Insights from the Life of Jesus in the Gospels" in *Health, Healing and Wholeness*, ed. Wati Longchar (ETE-WCC/CCA, 2005), p. 90.

[20] Razouselie Lasetso., p. 40.

[21] *Ibid*.,p. 44.