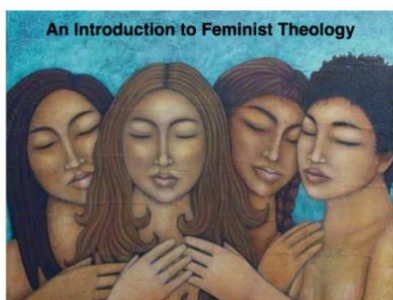


**Dear Members, Subscribers, Church Partners, and Friends,**

Greetings of Shalom to you! While Covid life has not fully ceased making our days tougher and harder, may we all survive well and continue our journey together with our loved ones. Online Editorial Advisory Committee & Coordinating Team Members Committee

## **ONLINE SOUTHEAST ASIA WORKSHOP**

In face of the enduring pandemic, Southeast Asia Workshop was first postponed and then held online during 26-28 November 2021. There were 16 participants attending the workshop, from Myanmar, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, and East Timor. Women who were studying in college, working at social welfare organization, clergy engaged in the church, or contributing their expertise as professors, all found the need to learn and explore deeper into the theme of “Women, Bible and Feminism.” We were honored to invite speakers Rev. Dr. Lizette Tapia-Raquel from the Philippines and Rev. Dr. Aye Aye Maw from Myanmar to accompany our sisters on the feminist journey.



In the first session, participants were introduced to Feminist Theology. Questions of yes and no regarding children and parents, wife and husband, were raised by Lizette for participants to ponder and answer. After this, more questions relevant to women were also raised. Questions like “What is our image of a beautiful woman?,” “What is the Bible’s view of women?,” and “What is Feminism and what are Feminist Theologies?” All these pointers gave us the idea about the importance of thinking and

re-thinking what we had thought or never thought of.



Lizette said Feminism is the radical notion that WOMEN are Human Beings, too. Feminist theology is seeking partnership and

resisting domination.

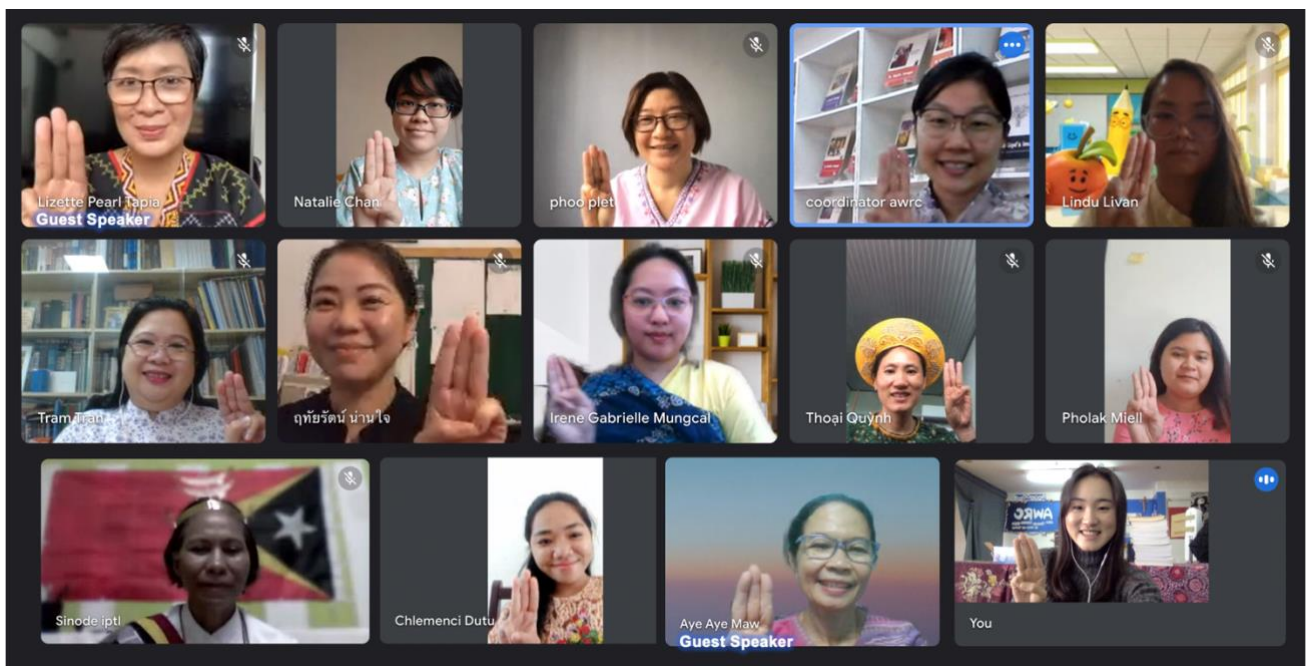
Next session was “Overcoming the Culture of Violence and Building a Just Society, a case study of Myanmar,” presented by Aye Maw. Participants came to know the whole picture of what violence is, forms and consequences of violence, and violence in the Bible and



lives of people. We saw how Myanmar women and children were the ones suffering most from violence in their real life. However, the violence has been more widespread since the coup. With hundreds injured, more than 1000 civilians have been killed during the military crackdown on the pro-democracy movement. While watching their youth fearlessly join the front line regardless of sacrificing precious lives, Myanmar people's heart were saddened, disappointed and yet ever more persistent.

Aye Maw pointed out that Myanmar women, in solidarity with men and LGBTs, were raising their voices and taking part in the struggle for liberation. She concluded the presentation by encouraging women to be bearers of liberation working to change history. Right after the closure, all sisters showed three-finger salute (civil disobedience movement, a symbol of resistance and opposition to the 2021 Myanmar coup) on standing for and being with Aye Maw and Myanmar people. Please know you are not alone!

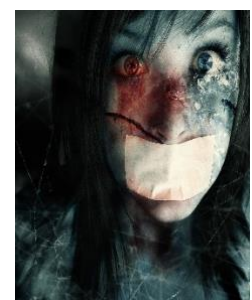
We shed our tears for those who give their lives



## Crying-Out



The third session was “Crying-Out, Resisting, Asserting, Celebration!” “Love and Abuse cannot co-exist” (attached picture) shown in the opening by Lizette, led participants to deeper thinking for long moment. She added that when we cry out, we cry out for and with those who need God the most. When it came to resistance, Lizette

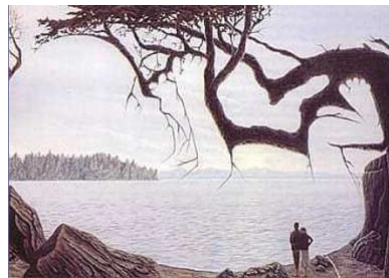


led everyone to examine repentance first. The problem with a theology of repentance in face of such statements “Suffering is caused by sin and a lack of faith” might well lead us to think and believe “so

homeless people have sinned and lack faith?" Another one "God chooses leaders and they should be obeyed," then do we think "So God chose them even if they are corrupt and abusive?" We need to examine and re-think what we were first taught and understood, especially those teachings we used to take for granted and believe without giving them a second thought.



The fourth session was "Re-reading John 4, Jesus and the Samaritan Woman." "What do you see?" was asked when the slide was presented. Different answers voiced right away from the participants, like ocean, couple, island, tree, and



baby...etc. Then came another question "What is the right answer and truth?" Lizette elaborated the Scriptures have and can be used for domination and liberation. A feminist reading on this text - Jesus who was a Jew was crossing boundaries by speaking

with a Samaritan Woman; Jesus did not condemn the woman for having had five husbands and then living with a man who is not her husband. Why do congregations like us usually have such a different/opposite understanding from them? Lastly, everyone was invited to reflect on "Are we in situations and relationships of domination?" and "Is it partnership or dominator-ship we are building?"



In the very last session "The Assumption of Desire," participants were more comfortable and ready to take questions. "What is the essence of a woman?" "Is desire a gift from God or a source of temptation?" "Is sex holy?" It was not that questions were raised and we immediately had answers on our mind. However, it is more like the questions are there and we are facing them, not ignoring them, no matter on the spot we can find the answer fully satisfying us or not. Then Helene Cixous, French Feminist Theorist, was introduced to participants, in her "Not WHO AM I? but WHO ARE I?" "Not BEING but always BECOMING" in the slide of multiplicity. No doubt, this Southeast Workshop was merely the beginning of a

feminist journey in the life of these Asian women participants, and it shall and will continue.

## CELEBRATING 40 YEARS *in God's image* & 35 YEARS AWRC



In April, AWRC signed the license agreement with American Theological Library Association (Atla). The *Atla Religion Database with AtlaSerials PLUS* combines the premier index to journal articles, book reviews, and collections of essays in all fields of religion and theology.

We are looking forward to seeing wider usage of iGi among academic faculty and students at seminaries as well as colleges.

### Ripples of iGi Monthly Reading Club

We are more than happy to share with you that Korean Association of Women Theologians (KAWT) has started to hold an iGi reading club this year. Hope to hear more of you taking the initiative in



your community reading iGi together. If you have any needs or inquiries regarding setting up a reading club, you are most welcome to contact us anytime.

### **iGi Chinese Translation Book Publication**

This booklet contains 16 articles from *iGi* during 2000-2020, which were materials for the local *iGi* Reading Club in Taiwan. Apart from practical and informative contents for Today's women, we also added Summary, Questions for Discussion, Spiritual Meditation, and Prayer at the back of the article for readers' friendly use. We welcome readers who are more comfortable with Chinese to seize this opportunity to meet and journey with *iGi*! Start reading by yourself or with a group - you are most welcome to share this news with your Chinese speaking friends, family and colleagues!



### **Welcome New Staff**

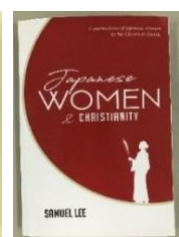
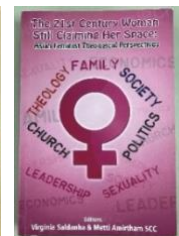
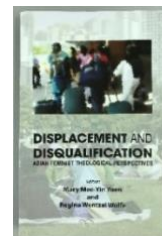


Thanks for God's grace, it was surprisingly short time after Paulili, publications assistant, left the office and Chia Hui MA came to join us! Chia is a mother of four and lives in a four-generation family! She is so attentive and conscientious in her work. I believe some of you have already communicated with Chia - you are always welcome to contact us whenever there's a need or to share news!!

### **Networking: Books Received**

Thank you, our ecumenical sisters and brothers, in solidarity with AWRC for sharing precious books. The first three titles are published by Ecclesia of Women in Asia (EWA), and the other two are by John C. England and Samuel Lee respectively.

1. Displacement and Disqualification Asian Feminist Theological Perspectives
2. FOODSCAPES Beyond the Food Environment - A Feminist Theological Take on Food Issues in Asia
3. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Woman Still Claiming Her Space: Asian Feminist Theological Perspectives
4. Cranes ever Flying Introductions to Asian Christian History and Theology
5. Japanese Women & Christianity



*In God's grace,*

*Hsiu-Yin Chan*  
AWRC Coordinator