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“Suffering-Jesus on the side of the Victims:
The Suffering of the “Christian-Untouchables” in the
Indian Catholic Church in the light of the New Political
Theology of Johann Baptist Metz”

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Christianity in India has always existed alongside the ancient religions of the world like Hinduism and Buddhism. Consequently, the Indian Catholic Church and its theology have focused primarily on inter-religious dialogue and subsequently on its relationship with other faiths. In the context of pluralistic religious beliefs, the Indian Church has been mainly influenced by Karl Rahner's theory of the "anonymous Christian". According to this theory, anonymous Christians are those who have no knowledge of Christ and live according to their conscience. In other words, the anonymous Christians do not explicitly confess Jesus as their Savior, but they do so implicitly in their existential condition, which means that they practice radical love of neighbor in their daily lives.¹

This concept of the anonymous Christian influenced the teachings of the Second Vatican Council² and modern theology³. This theory of Karl Rahner has also greatly influenced Indian theology in its context of inter-religious dialogue. In the context of India's religious pluralism, this concept is crucial for the acceptance of other religions and the recognition of their positive elements. But this concept also raises a great challenge for the Catholic Church in India. This is because the Catholic Church in India, even though it has accepted Jesus as its Saviour, does not live according to the Gospel, and does not live according to its conscience. The reason why I say this is because of the caste discrimination in the Indian Church and the divisions that exist among Christians because of casteism. In this context of caste discrimination, before speaking of "anonymous Christians" of other religions, it is important to speak of the "anonymous masses" who are exploited and victimized in the name of caste in the Catholic Church.

¹ Gavin D'COSTA, Karl Rahner's Anonymous Christian – A Reappraisal, in: *Modern Theology* 1/2 (1985), 131–148, here: 132.

² LG.16: "Those also can attain to salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and moved by grace strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience." Cf. CCC. 847: "... sacred books of other religion, which in actual fact direct and nourish the existence of their followers, receive from the mystery of Christ the elements of goodness and grace which they contain."

³ DI.8: Certainly, the various religious traditions contain and offer religious elements which come from God, and which are part of what "the Spirit brings about in human hearts and in the history of the peoples, in culture, and religions." Cf. also DI.21: "Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience – those too may achieve eternal salvation."

This is where the new political theology of Metz helps us to address this great problem of caste and its discrimination in the Indian Catholic Church. While Rahner speaks of anonymous Christians of other faiths, Metz speaks of the anonymous mass of victims in history. According to Johann Baptist Metz, this anonymous mass of people who are victims of various forms of discrimination, violence and oppression in history are beyond our concern.⁴ In the Indian Catholic context, the caste system and its discrimination make many Christians into victims, a damned mass in the Church. Therefore, the main concern of this thesis is that before talking about anonymous Christians in other religions, we urgently need to talk about anonymous masses exploited in the name of caste within the Indian Catholic Church. With the help of the new political theology of Johann Baptist Metz, my dissertation attempts to provide concrete solutions and suggestions for the eradication of caste discrimination in the Indian Catholic Church, in order to make it an authentic witness to the Gospel in the midst of religious pluralism.

This thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter is going to explain about Caste, how it originated and how it exists in the Indian society and how it influences the Indian Catholic Church. The Indian Catholic Church does not deny the cultural reality of casteism even though it accepted Jesus as its savior. The Indian Catholic Church is Christian by name, but it is the Indian Hindu Church with the strong cultural dimension of casteism. Casteism is not only the deeper and more complex problem of Indian society, but also of the Indian Catholic Church. The first chapter therefore deals clearly with casteism in the Indian Catholic Church.

The second chapter would bring out the sufferings of the Christian “untouchables” who are victims of caste discrimination and are placed in the lower grade of the caste system. The Christian-Untouchables are converted from Hinduism to Christianity with the great hope that they will not face any kind of discrimination, inequality, and exploitation in the Church. But they experience a double discrimination as “Christian-Untouchables.” They are rejected in the civil society in which they live and despised in the Church of which they become members by believing in the Gospel of love and

⁴ Johann Baptist METZ, *Faith in History & Society. Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology* [trans. by David SMITH], London 1980, 142–143.

justice. This chapter will focus mainly on the suffering of the “Christian-Untouchables” within the Church.

The third chapter will try to understand the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables in the light of the new political theology of Metz. And the final chapter of this thesis will speak of the eschatological hope for the victims of caste discrimination in the Indian Catholic Church. The Indian Catholic Church, which is the bearer and witness of the memory of the sufferings of Jesus, should open its eyes to the sufferings of the “Christian-Untouchables” and commit itself to the eradication of the sufferings of the “Christian-Untouchables” in the context of eschatological hope. With the help of the new political theology of Metz, the eschatological hope for the victims of caste discrimination is clearly discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 1

CASTEISM AND ITS INFLUENCE IN INDIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

1.1 Introduction

When we think of India, the first thing that springs to mind is that it is the largest democracy in the world; it is the cradle of ancient religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism; it is known for its religious tolerance. Last year it overtook China to become the world's most populous country. Despite these positive aspects of India, there is one very serious factor that reveals the dark side of India. It is caste, and its discrimination. Casteism in India is a stigma that continues to haunt Indian society even today. Caste is the basic structural feature of Indian society, and we cannot deny this truth, even all social scientists agree on it. From time immemorial, caste has been the dominant social order of Indian society.⁵ To understand Indian society, therefore, it is first and foremost necessary to understand the concept of caste, how it came into existence and how it evolved. Let us now have a concise overview on caste.

1.2 Definition of the Term 'Caste'

The word caste comes from the Portuguese word "*casta*", which means species, breed, race, or lineage.⁶ The Portuguese, who were the first to colonize India, used this word to refer the various segmented groups that could be found in Indian society. The Portuguese believed that the caste system in Indian society was designed to maintain the purity of individual groups. In that implication they called this system as '*casta*', which in Portuguese means 'pure' or 'chaste'.⁷ The term "caste" was used to indicate different groups of people in India until the nineteenth century. According to the 1901 census, there were 2,378 castes in India; it is estimated that there are currently about

⁵ Arunoday SANA, The Caste System in India and its Consequences, in: International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy 13/3/4 (1993), 1–76, here: 1.

⁶ Thomas M. LEONARD (ed.), Encyclopedia of the developing world, New York – London 2006, 253.

⁷ Anand TELTUMBDE, The persistence of Caste. The Khairlanji Murders and India's Hidden Apartheid, London 2010, 12.

three thousand caste groups.⁸ The Indian word used for caste is *jati*, and sometimes it is also used to refer to the *varnas*.⁹ The Sanskrit word *varna* literally means color and refers to the four basic classes described in the Hindu scriptures.¹⁰ For some time these four Varans were only classes. After some years only classes became castes (*Jati*) and the four became four thousand. It is undoubtedly clear that the caste system is an evolution of the *Varna* system.¹¹ In order to have an understanding of the caste system in India, it is necessary to have an idea of the four basic classes of varans in the Hindu religion.

1.3 Origin of Caste

The caste system's origins and evolution are ambiguous and uncertain. However, it is widely agreed that caste evolved from the *varna* system of Hinduism.¹² It is mainly because of its religiosity that India's caste system differs from the class systems of other countries.¹³ A Hindu believe that the four *varans* are not created by human beings, but they are given by God. So, one must accept this and follow what the scripture says. Now let us look at the scriptures that speak of these four *varnas* and what are the characteristics that they add to these four *varnas*.

1.4 Four *Varans* in Hindu Scriptures

Every Hindu believes that this social order of four *varnas* is a divine order. Society is divided into four classes according to this divine order, namely: 1. *Brahmins*, 2. *Kshatriyas*, 3. *Vaishyas* and 4. *Shudras*. These four classes are placed in a hierarchical order, and in their status to each other they are not equal. The *Brahmins*, who are at the top of the hierarchy and are superior to all others, are responsible for the acquisition of knowledge and the teaching of knowledge. The *Kshatriyas*, who are destined for military services, stand next to them. The third group are the *Vaishyas*, who are assigned to trade. And the last group are the *Shudras*, who are bound to do the menial

⁸ Cf. LEONARD, Caste System, 254.

⁹ Claude MEILLASSOUX, Are there Castes in India?, in: Economy and Society 2/1(2006) 89–111, here: 93.

¹⁰ Cf. TELTUMBDE, The persistence of Caste, 12.

¹¹ Bhimrao R. AMBEDKAR, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Writings and speeches, vol. 3, New Delhi 2014, 194.

¹² Cf. *ibid.*

¹³ Mason OLCOTT, The Caste System of India, in: American Sociological Review 9/6 (1944) 648 – 657, here: 648.

works for the other three groups mentioned above. This is called *Varna Vevastha* and it is the very soul of Hinduism. It is this *Varna Vevastha* that distinguishes Hinduism from other religions.¹⁴ It is from this diagram that we can clearly understand the *Varna Vevastha* of Hinduism.

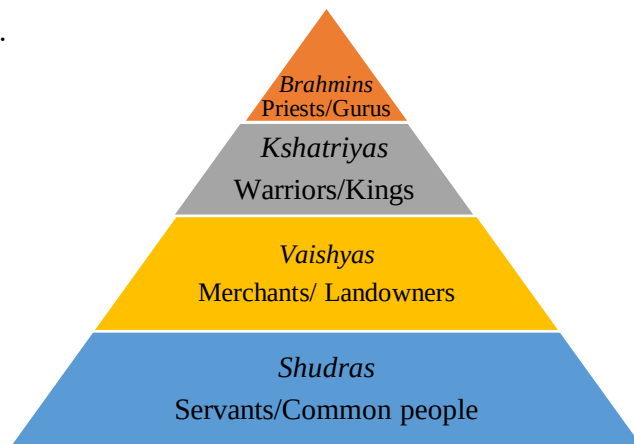


Figure 1¹⁵

1.4.1 In *Rig Veda*

The teaching of the four *varnas* first appears in the *Rig Veda*, the oldest of the four *Vedas*¹⁶ of Hinduism. In the hymn called *Purusha Sukta*, the *Rig Veda* embodies the official teaching of *varna*.¹⁷ According to this hymn, the distinction between the four *varnas* goes back to the very origins of humanity. That is, at the time of creation, the *Brahmins* were born from the mouth of *Brahma* (the God of Creation), the *Kshatriyas* from his arms, the *Vaishyas* from his thighs and the *Shudras* from his feet.¹⁸

Being an instruction from God, four varans became the ideal of the Indian Hindu society. Indian Hindu society was formed in accordance with *varna* system, and it was this form that gave Indian Hindu society its distinctive shape and structure. Its influence on the Indian Hindu society was profound and indelible. The social order prescribed by the *Purusha Sukta* became indisputable and indescribable and was never questioned by anyone except the Buddha. Even the Buddha was unable to question it and change it. The simple reason is that both after the fall of Buddhism and during the

¹⁴ Bhimrao R. AMBEDKAR, *Riddles in Hinduism*, New Delhi 2016, 257.

¹⁵ Shivam SING, *Varna System: A Cornerstone of Hinduism's Social Structure & Varna in Hinduism and its Significance*, in: *Mithila Today*, (10 February 2023). URL: <https://mithilatoday.com/varna-system-in-hinduism-its-significance> [accessed: 14 April 2023].

¹⁶ *Vedas* are the ancient religious text of Hinduism, and they are four in number and called: 1. *Rig Veda*, 2. *Sama Veda*, 3. *Yajur Veda* and 4. *Adharva Veda*.

¹⁷ Cf. AMBEDKAR, *Riddles in Hinduism*, 649.

¹⁸ Bhimrao R. AMBEDKAR, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. *Writings and speeches*, vol. 5, New Delhi 2014, 147.

period of Buddhism, there were enough lawgivers who took it upon themselves not only to defend the ideal of *Purusha Sukta*, but also to propagate and develop it.¹⁹

To propagate this *varna* system of *Purusha Sukta*, there are many later writings and teachings in the Hindu scriptures. Now we see some of them which describe some of the unique characters of these four *varnas*.

1.4.2 Hierarchical nature of *varnas* in *Apastamba Dharma*

The *Apastamba Dharma Sutra* says that among these four castes, each of the preceding castes is superior to the one that follows it. Among them, the first three are ordained to initiation, that is, to wear the sacred threads, to study the *Vedas* or scriptures, and to offer sacrifices in the sacred fire. The fourth group, the *Shudras*, who have committed evil deeds, are not allowed to do any of these things.²⁰ The members of the first three castes are naturally from the Aryan society and the *Shudras* are aborigines of India. The Aryans who invaded India they manipulated the indigenous India and created this caste system in the society, and they occupied the first three positions and pushed the native Indians to the last level.²¹

1.4.3 The double birth and its privilege according to *Vasishtha Dharma Sutra*

The *Vasishtha Dharma Sutra* states that the first three castes, called *Brahmins*, *Kshatriyas* and *Vaishyas*, have two births. The first birth is from their mother. The second birth takes place when they are invested with the sacred thread. In this birth the teacher who teaches them *Veda* becomes their father and *Savitri*²² is mother.²³ By virtue of this second birth, these people have the right to take part in the worship presided by the *Brahmins*. The *Shudras* are not predestined to be born twice. They are born only once by their mother. Since they do not have this double birth, they are not allowed to take part in the worship done by the *Brahmins*.²⁴

¹⁹ Bhimrao R. AMBEDKAR, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Writings and speeches, vol. 7, Bombay 1946 [Reprint: Bombay 1990], 23.

²⁰ Cf. Ibid., 24. Cf. also Bhimrao R. AMBEDKAR, Who were the *Shudras*? How they came to be the fourth *Varna* in the Indo-Aryan society, Bombay 1947, 3f.

²¹ Hiroyuki KOTANI (ed.), Caste system, untouchability, and the depressed (Japanese studies on South Asia Vol. 1) New Delhi 1997, 3f.

²² Savitri is a Hindu goddess, who is wife of *Brahma*, the God of creator, the daughter of solar God, *Savitri*.

²³ AMBEDKAR, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Writings and speeches, vol. 7, 24.

²⁴ Cf. KOTANI (ed.), Caste system, untouchability, and the depressed, 3.

1.4.4 Infallibility und divinity of *varna* system by *Manu smriti*

There are also other scriptural writings in Hinduism which simply repeat the theme of the *Purusha Sukta* and reaffirm its sanctity. But *Manu Smriti*, the Hindu code of law attributed to the lawgiver Manu, went a step further and enunciated the four *varnas* as part of the divine injunction.²⁵ The ancient *Manu smriti* also systematized the four *varna* system of *Purusha Sukta*²⁶ and endowed the *varna* system with a degree of divinity and infallibility and therefore no one can question it.²⁷

1.5 Aryan invasion and emergence of Caste with sociological and anthropological evidence

However, it is argued that the four *varnas* were invented around 1000-600 BC and introduced into the *Rig Veda* to legitimize the *varna* system. This was done by the Aryans who invaded India around 1500 BC.²⁸ They had different physical and cultural characteristics from the original inhabitants of India. To maintain these characteristics in the new environment, they created this social organization of *varnas* which we call now as caste. This social structure became the defining feature of classical Hindu religion and society.²⁹ Sociological and anthropological evidences support this theory.

1.5.1 Endogamy as the evidence of Caste system

The endogamy in the Hindu society of India is the key that describes the secret of the caste system in India. Endogamy, which is a contributory factor in the maintenance of the caste system, is the introduction of the Aryans. Indian society practiced exogamy before the invasion of the Aryans. The invading Aryans, who considered themselves pure and special, did not want to mix with the indigenous Indians, so they adopted endogamy. So, they followed the practice of endogamy and intermarried within their

²⁵ Cf. AMBEDKAR, Who were the *Shudras*, 4.

²⁶ Cf. KOTANI (ed.), Caste system, untouchability, and the depressed, 8.

²⁷ Cf. AMBEDKAR, Who were the *Shudras*, 4.

²⁸ Cf. KOTANI (ed.), Caste system, untouchability, and the depressed, 3.

²⁹ Arvind SHARMA, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar on the Aryan Invasion and the Emergence of the Caste System in India, in: Journal of the American Academy of Religion 73/3 (2005) 843–870, here: 844.

own group. This practice of endogamy is still maintained in Indian Hindu society to artificially divide the Indian population into separate groups as castes.³⁰

1.5.2 Anthropological evidence of Caste System

Some path breaking DNA results along with archaeological and linguistic findings also prove the invasion of Aryans and advent of caste in India.³¹ The Aryan invasion has also been proven by David Reich's genetic research based on DNA evidence from over three hundred groups and more than eighteen thousand individuals from modern India.³² His genetic research identifies two highly differentiated populations in India, Ancestral North Indians (ANI) and Ancestral South Indians (ASI). The DNA of the ANI people are related to the East Asians, the Central Asians, the Middle Easterners, and the Europeans of today. But the DNA of the ASI people are not related to any of the people of today outside of India.³³ This genetic result is also evidence of the arrival of the Aryans from East Asia and their invasion of the indigenous Indian population. In order to maintain their clan and the purity of their race, they created the caste system and introduced it into Indian society through the *Vedas* and religion.

1.6 The fifth class

Later developments in the four-*varna* system resulted in two important things. The first is the creation of a fifth class below the *Shudras* and the second is the separation of the *Shudras* from the other first three groups. The fifth class is called as Untouchables in technical term *Avarnas*. This means that they do not belong to any of the four *Varnas*.³⁴ This thesis will mainly deal with this group of people who are still treated as Untouchables in Indian society and even in the Catholic Church. They are victims of the insolent discrimination and exploitation of the caste system. In modern understanding and research, the fourth group of people who are called *Shudras* are identified with the Untouchables and are subject to the same discrimination and

³⁰ Bhimrao R. AMBEDKAR, Caste in India. Their Mechanism, genesis and Development. This paper was read by B.R. AMBEDKAR before the anthropology seminar of Dr. A. A. Goldenweiser, 9th May 1916, Columbia University, New York, 7–11.

³¹ Bhimrao R. AMBEDKAR, Beef, *Brahmins*, and broken men. An annotated critical selection from the Untouchables, ed. by Alex GEORGE – Shaphur ANAND, New York 2019, 124.

³² David REICH, who we are and how we got here. Ancient DNA and the new science of the human past, Oxford 2018, 129.

³³ Cf. REICH, who we are and how we got here, 135.

³⁴ Cf. AMBEDKAR, who were the *Shudras*, 14f.

exploitation in contemporary Indian society. So, when I speak of Untouchables in my dissertation, it obviously includes both the fifth and fourth group of *varna* system, because both groups face the same discrimination and exploitation while the Untouchables are outside the *varnas*, and the *Shudras* are outside the twice born.³⁵ Let us now take a brief look at who the Untouchables are and how they considered Untouchables and outcasts.

1.6.1 The Untouchables

From ancient time untouchability in Hinduism is always associated with the idea of impurity and unclean. This concept of impurity and uncleanness, by which the unclean person is defiled and excluded from mainstream society, also existed in other religions in the primitive societies. But there the impurity and the uncleanness will only be there for a temporary period. Through the performance of some religious ceremonies and customs, the unclean person will be made clean, and they will be included in the mainstream society. But in the case of the untouchables in Hinduism, they are born unclean and impure, their birth itself gives them the stigma of untouchability and they are permanently impure. They are born untouchable and die untouchable, their impurity and uncleanness are permanent, hereditary and cannot be purified or cleansed by anything.³⁶ Even there is a proverb in Hinduism which says that ‘the untouchable is dead, and the fear of pollution is vanished.’³⁷ In this way, untouchability in Hinduism was an inhuman practice and a great social evil. In other ancient societies the impure person is an individual, whereas in Hinduism it is a class of people considered impure, untouchables.³⁸ Let us take a brief look at where, how, and why this pernicious concept of untouchability emerged in Hinduism.

1.6.2 Origin and condition of Untouchability

According to *Manu Smriti*, the untouchables are called as *chandalas*, and they are born of a *Shudra* father and a *Brahmana* or a *Kshatriya* or a *Vaishya* mother and they are

³⁵ Louis DUMONT, *Homo Hierarchicus*. The caste system and its implications [trans. by Mark SAINSBURY], Chicago 1970, 68.

³⁶ Bhimrao R. AMBEDKAR, *The untouchables*. Who were they and why they became untouchables, New Delhi 1948, 31–34.

³⁷ Cf. AMBEDKAR, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Writings and speeches, vol. 5, 17.

³⁸ Cf. AMBEDKAR, *The untouchables*, 31–34.

the lowest of the human beings.³⁹ The untouchables were assigned to some of the menial jobs in society. These included removing waste, including human excrement, slaughtering animals, making shoes from animal skins, and burying the dead. This means that they had to do with decay, death, and uncleanness. It was because they were doing all these things that they were segregated from the rest of the society and lived on the outskirts of the villages and towns. They were not allowed to enter clean environments like temples and schools, and they are not allowed to go near to drinking water sources.⁴⁰ Apart from these references in the *Manu Smriti*, we do not find any other references to the untouchables in the Hindu scriptures. However, we can understand the roots of untouchability in Indian Hindu society when we look at the reasons and causes of untouchability in contemporary times.

1.6.3 The Untouchables according to the 1911 census in modern India

The real distinction between touchable Hindus and Untouchables was made in the 1911 census. There were 10 reasons for the designation of a person as an untouchable. These 10 reasons can be summarized as: Denying the supremacy of *Brahmins* and eating beef. So, according to this census of 1911, those people who denied the supremacy of the *Brahmins* and those who ate beef were untouchables.⁴¹ If we go back in history to understand why some people refused to accept the supremacy of the *Brahmins* and why they ate beef, it will almost reveal to us the realities of how the Untouchables came to exist.

1.6.4 The Buddha and Buddhists as Untouchables

The Buddha strongly opposed the doctrine of *varnas*, and also he vehemently rejected the theory that the *Vedas* are infallible and that their authority could never be called into question. He believed that nothing could be taken as definitive without being questioned. The Buddha considered that to know the truth, one should have the freedom of thought, which is the most essential, and that the infallibility of the *Vedas* would completely deny the freedom of thought.⁴² After the Buddha, Buddhists also rejected the infallibility of *Vedas* and denied the *varna* system and they strongly

³⁹ F. Max MÜLLER – Georg BÜHLER, *The laws of Manu*, London 2022, 229–231.

⁴⁰ Cf. TELTUMBDE, *The persistence of Caste*, 14f.

⁴¹ Cf. AMBEDKAR, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. *Writings and speeches*, vol. 5, 7.

⁴² Bhimrao R. AMBEDKAR, *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, Bombay 1957, 64f.

rejected the supremacy of *Brahmins*. Buddhists never allowed the *Brahmins* to perform any religious duties in their houses. So, the *Brahmins*, who enjoyed all the benefits of this caste system and who enforced on the infallibility of *Vedas*, were against the Buddhists and they instigated a kind of resentment and hatred against them and called them untouchables.⁴³ This was the basic reason that gave way to the creation of a new group of people as the Untouchables, outside of the four *varans*. *Brahmins*, whose ideology was attacked by the Buddha and his teachings, took revenge on the Buddha and his followers, and placed them below the four classes of society, and called them untouchables.⁴⁴

The Buddha also condemned the sacrifice of animals to the deities. He saw animal sacrifices to please the gods for personal gain as a false sacrifice.⁴⁵ According to *Vedas* the sacrifice of animals was common. Cow and ox were offered to gods for the salvation of the souls. The sacrificed animals were eaten by all and hence the eating of beef was normal in the *Vedic* period. Since the slaughter of cows in the name of religious worship was widespread, even some of the Hindu scriptures admonished against the excess of killing of cows in the name of religious sacrifice, but they did not prohibit the eating of beef.⁴⁶ The Buddha also condemned only animal sacrifice, not the eating of beef. The Buddha and his followers did eat beef as well. After the Buddha and his teachings against four *varnas* and the infallibility of *Vedas*, remarkably against animal sacrifice, Buddhism became very popular among the people. Hinduism slowly began to lose its popularity and name among the people. In order to regain their reputation and popularity, the *Brahmins* were under considerable pressure to drive Buddhism out of society, and they were desperate to gain supremacy over the Buddhists. It was in this situation that the *Brahmins* gave up animal sacrifice and the eating of beef. Moreover, they became vegetarians to show that they are supreme than the Buddhists. They went a step further and made the cow sacred and introduced the concept that those who eat beef are committing sacrilege. In this way the *Brahmins* took up the rivalry against the Buddhists and made them outcasts and pushed them away from the Hindu *Varna* system. Thus, eating beef became the reason for untouchability and they were excluded from society.⁴⁷ After the *Brahmins*, the other

⁴³ Cf. AMBEDKAR, The untouchables, 102–107.

⁴⁴ AMBEDKAR, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Writings and speeches, vol. 7, 315.

⁴⁵ Cf. AMBEDKAR, The Buddha and His Dhamma, 65.

⁴⁶ Cf. AMBEDKAR, The untouchables, 102–107.

⁴⁷ Cf. AMBEDKAR, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Writings and speeches, Vol. 5, 341–355.

two groups also stopped eating beef, but they ate the other meats. On the other hand, the Buddhists and those who were against the caste system did eat beef along with other types of meat. They do not want to be imitators of the *Brahmins*, and they do not want to prove that they are pure and holy.

The Buddha questioned the infallibility of the *Vedas*, denied the *varna* system and criticized animal sacrifice, and became a prominent opponent of the *Brahmins*, who were the only group to enjoy all the benefits of the *Vedas* and the *varna* system. Naturally, a kind of aversion and enmity developed on the part of the *Brahmins* towards the Buddha and his followers. Because of this enmity, those, who questioned the infallibility of the *Vedas* and their doctrine of the *varna* system, were driven out of the four *varnas* of Hinduism. They were outside the Hindu social system and were not members of the Hindu society. Naturally, they were not included in the mainstream society and were forced to live outside the villages and towns. This led to the creation of a group outside the four *Varnas*. They were called untouchables or outcaste.

1.6.5 Condition of Untouchables in Indian Hindu Society

Every Indian village is divided into two parts, one for the touchable, the caste Hindus, and the other for the untouchables, the outcaste. The caste Hindus, who are the majority, live inside the village and the untouchables, the minorities, live outside the village. Economically, the caste Hindus are powerful and rich. The untouchables are poor and weak. Socially, the caste Hindus are in the position of ruling and power while the untouchables are subjects under their rule. If we compare the condition of the untouchables with that of the slaves in other parts of the world, then their condition is even worse and more pathetic.⁴⁸

There are also some codes of law which are imposed by the touchable Hindus on the Untouchables. The Untouchables must follow them without fail. The untouchables should live in a separate place. This place should be in the south of the village or town because the south is considered inauspicious by the caste Hindus. The Untouchables should maintain a distance to avoid pollution, while it is said that when Untouchables pass by a caste Hindu, they will pollute him and even their shadow will pollute that caste Hindu. The untouchables should not acquire wealth, should not wear clean

⁴⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 18–21.

clothes and golden or silver ornaments, should not build a house with tiled roof, and they should not sit in front of a caste Hindu.⁴⁹

There were also certain duties that the untouchables had to perform for the Caste Hindus. They must carry the news of the death and the marriage of a caste Hindu family to their relatives, who are living in other villages. The untouchables must do all the household work of the caste Hindus in their house during every festival. During the general festival of the village, the untouchables must do all the cleaning work and they should help in every possible way for the celebration of the festival.⁵⁰ Untouchables do not have the right to education, and they are not allowed to go to school for education according to this established code of law.⁵¹ Even when they die, they are treated very cruelly. The dead body of an untouchable should not be carried on the main streets where caste Hindus live, and untouchables' dead bodies should be buried or cremated separately from where a caste Hindu is buried or cremated.⁵²

The untouchables are born to serve the caste Hindus. They cannot refuse to do the duties that the code of law has imposed on them by the caste Hindus.⁵³ When the Untouchables do not follow this code of law and fail in their duties, they would be punished by caste Hindus.⁵⁴ The caste Hindu will use the utmost violence against the Untouchables when they fail to do their duties as untouchables.⁵⁵ The violence against the untouchables in Hindu society originates from this point of view.

1.6.6 The Violence against the Untouchables in modern India.

The violence against the untouchables has been a daily occurrence in Indian society from the ancient time to the present day. The Indian Constitution of 1950 has abolished the untouchability in India by making the untouchability as a criminal offence. The Indian Constitution, while guaranteeing the fundamental rights of the individual, ensures equality of all citizens before the law and prohibits any discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. It also abolishes the practice of

⁴⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 21f.

⁵⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 22.

⁵¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 39.

⁵² Cf. *ibid.*, 43f.

⁵³ Cf. *ibid.*, 55.

⁵⁴ Felix WILFRED, *Dalit Empowerment*, Delhi ²2007, 20.

⁵⁵ Cf. AMBEDKAR, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. *Writings and speeches*, Vol. 5, 35.

untouchability and criminalizes any form of it.⁵⁶ Moreover, the Indian constitution also brought the policy of reservation for the untouchables. This is so that they can get education and decent job through which they can regain their social status.⁵⁷ Despite the constitutional prohibition of untouchability and caste-based discrimination, untouchables in contemporary India experience disadvantage, discrimination, and violence in the name of caste.⁵⁸ At this point I would like to give a typical and tragic example of such discrimination that took place last year.

In 2022 December took an incident in a village called Vengaivayal in the state of Tamil Nadu, India. This is a typical example of how caste continues to discriminate against the untouchables even today. Some of the caste Hindus mixed human excrement in the overhead water tank which is supplying drinking water to the Untouchables of that village. After drinking that human excrement mixed water some of the villagers from the Untouchables fall sick. The reason for this cruel activity is that the district collector took the Untouchables to the village Temple, where the Untouchables are not allowed to enter because of their caste. Even in the coffee shop of that village separate glasses were given to the Untouchables. This act was also condemned by the district collector. Since the collector of district brought untouchables into the temple and condemned the practice of untouchability in the coffee shops, the Caste Hindus could not accept and tolerate this act and mixed the human excrement in the drinking water.⁵⁹ This is the arrogance of the caste people in India, and they are very cruel in the way they deal with the untouchables. This kind of violence and discrimination against untouchables shows how deeply the caste mindset is embedded in the individual of every Indian. This is not the only incident to illustrate the violence inflicted on the untouchables, but there are countless more happening daily in India.

⁵⁶ Annapurna WAUGHRAV, Caste Discrimination and Minority Rights: The Case of India's Dalits, in: *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights* 17 (2010) 327–353, here: 339.

⁵⁷ Cf. TELTUMBDE, *The persistence of Caste*, 15.

⁵⁸ Cf. WAUGHRAV, *Caste Discrimination and Minority Rights*, 329.

⁵⁹ Nacchinarkkiniyan MANIKANDAN, Caste Tensions come to the fore at Vengaivayal in Tamil Nadu, in: *The New Indian Express*, (28th December 2022). URL: <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/tamil-nadu/2022/dec/28/caste-tensions-come-to-the-fore-at-vengaivayal-in-tamil-nadu-2532406.html> [accessed: 04.05.2023].

1.6.7 Conversion into other Religion as Emancipation from Caste Oppression

The untouchables were convinced that the oppression and violence to which they were subjected was based on the scriptures and teachings of Hinduism. They believed that conversion from Hinduism to other religions would emancipate them and free them from all this oppression and violence. The untouchables continued to see the Hindu religion as the primary cause of their oppression and source of their suffering and expected that religious conversion would lead to their emancipation.⁶⁰ With this in mind, they converted to other religions such as Buddhism, Sikhism, Islam, and Christianity.

1.6.8 Conversion of Untouchables to Christianity and their Condition

Compared to other religions, conversion to Christianity was more significant. This was due to the mission work of people like Saint Thomas, the Apostle, Saint Francis Xavier, Saint John de Britto and other European missionaries.⁶¹ After St. Thomas in the first century, the Jesuit missionaries from the 15th to the 17th century and the French missionaries of MEP from the 18th to the 19th century converted many Hindus to Christianity. Most of these missionaries focused on high-caste Hindus, thinking that lower castes would automatically convert. However, mass conversions of untouchables did not take place until the 19th and 20th centuries.⁶² The conversion of the untouchables from Hinduism to Christianity was an act of social protest against the caste discrimination in Hinduism. For them, it was an act of religious prophecy that gave them the hope of a new and dignified life through the acceptance of Christianity. It was this prophetic hope that largely paved the way for the conversion of the untouchables to Christianity.⁶³

The Untouchables converted to Christianity with the great hope that they will not be discriminated again in Christianity. They hoped that they will get human dignity and respect and they will be treated equal by all the converted Christians. They also hoped that through education and employment they would rise in social status and

⁶⁰ Anand TELTUMBDE, *Dalits. Past, present, and future*, New Delhi 2016, 117f.

⁶¹ Cf. AMBEDKAR, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. *Writings and speeches*, vol. 5, 428–430.

⁶² Mary BALA, *An Overview of Factors Causing the Problems Faced by Dalit Christians with special Reference to Tamil Nadu*, in: *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research* 6/3 (2019), 32–39, here: 35f.

⁶³ CBCI, *Policy of Dalit Empowerment in the Catholic Church in India. An Ethical Imperative to Build Inclusive Communities*, (8th December 2016), New Delhi 2016, 12.

would also find the solidarity of other Christians in times of hardship and oppression.⁶⁴ But when we explore the reality, we see the opposite. The untouchables who were converted they undergo the same discrimination even in Christianity. It is obviously evident in the memorandum presented to Simon commission by the Christian-Untouchables of south India.⁶⁵ The extract of the memorandum expresses the disappointment of the Christian-Untouchables in Indian Church.⁶⁶ This Memorandum says:

In spite, however, of our Christian religion, which teaches us fundamental truths, the equality of man and man before God, the necessity of charity and love for neighbors and mutual sympathy and forbearance, we, the large number of Depressed classes converts remain in the same social condition as the Hindu Depressed Classes. Through the operation of several factors, the more important of them being the strong caste retaining Hindu mentality of the converts to Christianity, and the indifference, powerlessness and apathy of the Missionaries, we remain today what we were before we became Christians—Untouchables—degraded by the laws of social position obtaining in the land, rejected by caste Christians, despised by Caste Hindus and excluded by our own Hindu Depressed Class brethren.⁶⁷

This is a clear indication that the upper caste Hindus who have converted to Christianity retain the severity and mentality of caste. The high caste Christians who have converted to Christianity treat the untouchables as unapproachable by keeping them separate in the church. They use barricades like iron rails, fences, and walls to keep the Christian-Untouchables away from them. Contrary to Christian love, charity, and brotherhood, converted upper caste Christians continue the practice of casteism in Christianity. This tells us that Christianity has not succeeded in eliminating the casteism among converted Christians.⁶⁸ The condition and social situation of the Christian-Untouchables remain the same.⁶⁹

The caste system, which has preoccupied the Hindus of India for more than two thousand years, is still very much present in the minds of the Hindus and in their culture. The consciousness of caste is always strong in every caste Hindu because they consider it to be a privilege and a source of pride. The caste Hindu will easily ask the

⁶⁴ Cf. BALA, An Overview of Factors Causing the Problems Faced by Dalit Christians, 36.

⁶⁵ Cf. AMBEDKAR, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Writings and speeches, vol. 5, 454.

⁶⁶ Jebamalai RAJA, The Problem of Caste within the Church, in: Journal of Dharma: Dharmaram Journal of Religions 24/1 (1999) 28–39, here: 28.

⁶⁷ Vasundhra PORWAL, Caste and Conversion in India, URL: <https://www.legalservicesindia.com/article/1521/Caste-and-Conversion-in-India.html> [accessed: 09.05.2023]. Cf. also AMBEDKAR, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Writings and speeches, vol. 5, 454.

⁶⁸ Cf. AMBEDKAR, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Writings and speeches, vol. 5, 455.

⁶⁹ Cf. DUMONT, Homo Hierarchicus, 203.

other to which caste he or she belongs. If they come to know that the person who is standing in front of them is an untouchable, they will oppress him or her without any reason at all. Conversion to Christianity does not change this caste consciousness. After conversion to Christianity, the converted upper castes maintain their caste ancestry and treat the converted untouchables as inferior and discriminate them.⁷⁰ It is sad to see that the Christian Church in India has not challenged the caste system. Rather, it has surrendered to the hierarchical value of the caste system and remains a Christian Hindu Church. The Christian Church, which rooted in the values of the Gospel and in the life and deeds of Jesus, has been able to tolerate the caste system without seriously questioning the insidious practice that goes against the human dignity and equality. Even it justifies the caste system and maintains its hierarchical and discriminatory nature within it.⁷¹ Therefore, there is no denying that the Indian Church is polarized along caste lines.⁷² The church is organized around caste structures and caste identities just like any other organization in India. That is why we see caste identity among the converted upper caste Christians. They keep the name of their caste along with their name and they have a separate group under the name of their caste.⁷³

Since the presence of caste discrimination is evident and widespread in the Catholic Church of India, the former Popes have also condemned it and encouraged the Indian bishops to take strong steps to eradicate this social evil from the Church. In this regard, we can see that Pope John Paul II addressed the Indian Bishops in 2003, during their ‘*Ad Limina*’ visit, and said to them as follows:

At all times, you must continue to make certain that special attention is given to those belonging to the lowest castes, especially the Dalits. They should never be segregated from other members of society. Any semblance of a caste-based prejudice in relations between Christians is a countersign to authentic human solidarity, a threat to genuine spirituality and a serious hindrance to the Church’s mission of evangelization. Therefore, customs or traditions that perpetuate or reinforce caste division should be sensitively reformed so that they may become an expression of the solidarity of the whole Christian community.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Cf. TELTUMBDE, *The persistence of Caste*, 66f.

⁷¹ Cf. RAJA, *The Problem of Caste within the Church*, 29f.

⁷² Cf. *ibid.*, 31.

⁷³ Cf. *ibid.*, 35.

⁷⁴ Address of Pope John Paul II to the Bishops of India on their *Ad Limina* visit on 17th November 2003. URL: https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2003/november/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20031117_ad-limina-india.html [Access: 14.05.2023].

Pope Benedict XVI also encouraged the Indian bishops during their *Ad Limina* visit in 2011 to have a good relationship with their priests and religious, without any prejudices based on caste or ethnicity. He said:

Moreover, the witness of the reciprocal love and service between you and your priests – without regard for caste or ethnicity but focused upon the love of God, the spread of the Gospel and the sanctification of the Church – is earnestly desired by the people you serve. They look to you and your priests for a model of holiness, friendship and harmony that speaks to their hearts and teaches by example how to live the new commandment of love.⁷⁵

These advice of the popes to the Indian bishops clearly says that the caste discrimination is evident in the Indian catholic Church even in the 21st century.

1.7 Conclusion

With the hope of regaining their lost dignity and status, the untouchables converted to Christianity.⁷⁶ But the baptism that they received made them the children of God, but it did not give them the status to be the sisters and brothers of their fellow Christians. Even after conversion, caste and discrimination continued and the untouchables did not regain the dignity and social status that they had lost in Hinduism as unclean and untouchable. In this chapter we have had a brief look at what the Hindu caste system is and how it affects the Catholic Church in India. In the next chapter, our focus will be mainly on the caste discrimination against the Christian-Untouchables and their sufferings.

⁷⁵ Address of Pope Benedict XVI to Bishops of the Episcopal conference of India on their Ad Limina visit on 17th June 2011. URL: https://www.vatican.va/content/benedictx-vi/en/speeches/2011/june/documents/hf_benxvi_spe_20110617_ad-limina-india.html [Access: 14.05.2023].

⁷⁶ Felix WILFRED (ed.), *Leave the Temple. Indian Paths to Human Liberation*, Oregon 2009, 22.

CHAPTER 2

THE SUFFERING OF THE CHRISTIAN-UNTOUCHABLES IN THE INDIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

2.1 Introduction

Even after conversion to Christianity, the discrimination and violence that untouchables faced in Hinduism continued. Just by moving out of Hinduism, they could not change their social standard, which means that even after conversion, they continue to be considered impure and untouchable. The caste system, which was the basis of discrimination against untouchables in Hinduism, was also a feature of Christianity. As a result, Christian-Untouchables are subjected to the same discrimination and exclusion as converts.⁷⁷ In this sense the Christian-Untouchables undergo fivefold discriminations as converted Christians. First, they are oppressed by the state, which denies Scheduled Caste status to the Christian-Untouchables. But the other untouchables who have converted to Buddhism and Sikhism enjoy Scheduled Caste status and get all the benefits of the state. Secondly, they are oppressed by the caste Hindus. Even if they are converted to Christianity, the caste Hindus regard them as untouchables and discriminate against them. Thirdly, they are oppressed by church authorities and leaders. We will have concrete examples of this discrimination in the following pages. Fourthly, the oppression by the high caste Christians. This oppression is more vigorous than the other form of oppression for the Christian-Untouchables. Finally, the Christian-Untouchables are under the oppression of the Hindu untouchables. It is because of their conversion to Christianity that the Hindu untouchables reject and condemn the Christian-Untouchables.⁷⁸ From this perspective of fivefold oppression, we can say that the Christian-Untouchables themselves feel doubly discriminated and alienated by both the Church and the State. The feeling of the Christian-Untouchables is that all their struggles for dignity and equality have fallen on deaf ears of the Church and⁷⁹ the state. In this chapter we will clearly see

⁷⁷ Yaschia DUTT, *Coming out as Dalit. A Memoir*, New Delhi 2019, 17.

⁷⁸ Cf. RAJA, *The Problem of Caste within the Church*, 30.

⁷⁹ Lazar Roy, *Ghar Waspi – Which or Whose Home?* URL: https://www.academia.edu/17871994/Ghar_Waspi_Which_or_Whose_Home. [accessed: 26.08.2023].

how the Christian-Untouchables are discriminated in the Church and what are all the sufferings they go through in the Church, even after conversion.

2.2 The process of conversion and the genesis of caste discrimination

Casteism and discrimination have long existed in the Indian Catholic Church and are not recent or modern issues. The process of conversion itself has contributed to the continuation of caste distinctions among Catholic converts, leading to the emergence of caste discrimination within the Church. Now we will look at how caste discrimination came to be prevalent within the Catholic Church.

2.2.1 Discrimination factors in the Portuguese Mission

Conversion of Hindus to Christianity began in the 16th century by Portuguese missionaries in Goa. These missionaries were mainly concerned with the conversion of upper caste Hindus such as *Brahmins* and other dominant castes. Their hope in the early stages was that the conversion of upper-caste people to Hinduism would lead to the conversion of lower-caste people. But this did not occur. Because it was the converted upper castes who vehemently opposed the conversion of the lower castes. The upper caste converts did not want the lower caste people to be their equals. So, the discrimination based on caste started from the very beginning of the conversion process itself. Later, the missionaries started converting the lower castes, though there was strong opposition from the upper caste converts.⁸⁰ It was particularly St Francis Xavier who arrived in Goa, in 1542, and preached the gospel to the fishermen and lower caste people of the Coromandel coast. As a result of his missionary work, most of the lower caste people in the Coromandel coast were converted to Christianity. It was the great opening for the conversion of the untouchables to the Christian faith.⁸¹

It was after the conversion of the lower castes to Christianity that the discrimination in the Church of Goa began. For example, the lower caste Untouchables were banned from entering seminaries by the First Provincial Council of Goa in 1567, the Third Provincial Council of Goa in 1585 and the Fifth Provincial Council of Goa in 1606. The Fifth Provincial Council of Goa openly declared that the lower castes should not

⁸⁰ Mary John MARIA SUSAI, Struggle of Dalit Christians within and outside the Church, in: Christian Responsibility to Dalits & Caste Discrimination. Conference Report, ed. by CNACD, London 2017, 72–90, here: 74.

⁸¹ John C. WEBSTER, The Dalit Christians: A History, New Delhi 2009, 30–32.

be allowed to enter the religious orders or the priesthood in order to preserve the dignity and respect of the priesthood and ecclesiastical positions. Only sons of higher castes, such as *Brahmins* or the other dominant castes, should be ordained. The same synod also instructed the rectors of the seminaries not to teach Latin to those who were not *Brahmins*.⁸² This kind of discrimination, which was introduced in the diocese of Goa, was also adopted by the other dioceses of India, and is practiced still even today.

2.2.2 Discrimination factors in the Madura Mission

We have another striking example of caste discrimination in the process of conversion that took place in the Madura Mission in Tamil Nadu. After St Francis Xavier, many Jesuit missionaries came to India to do missionary work. One of them was Robert de Nobili, the founder of this Madura Mission.⁸³ In contrast to St Francis Xavier, Robert de Nobili went to the *Brahmins* and the Hindus of the higher castes.⁸⁴ In particular, he went to the court of Perumal Naik, the king of Madura, and converted many members of the king's family.⁸⁵ He dressed like a Hindu Sanyasi and carried out his missionary work only among the *Brahmins* and rulers.⁸⁶ The converted upper castes wanted to retain some of their caste customs and traditions. In order to allow certain caste practices and traditions to continue among the new converts, Robert de Nobili wrote to Rome asking the Pope's permission.⁸⁷ The Bull of Pope Gregory XV, "*Bulla Romana Sedis Antistes*" of 31 January 1623, allowed some caste practices and traditions to be retained among the new high-caste converts.⁸⁸ The wearing of the sacred thread and the mark on the forehead, the denial of the sacraments to women at certain times, and the refusal to marry and eat outside the caste are some of the practices retained by the converted Christians.⁸⁹ As these practices were considered by Rome to be social factors and had nothing to do with the Christian faith, the papal bull was in favour of the toleration of such caste practices among new converts. Rome's

⁸² Cf. MARIA SUSAI, *Struggle of Dalit Christians within and outside the Church*, 75.

⁸³ CBCI, *Policy of Dalit Empowerment in the Catholic Church in India*, 12.

⁸⁴ Cf. DUMONT, *Homo Hierarchicus*, 204.

⁸⁵ Cf. AMBEDKAR, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. *Writings and speeches*, vol. 5, 456.

⁸⁶ Ashok Kumar MOCHERLA, *Dalit Christians in South India. Caste, Ideology and lived Religion*, London 2021. 108.

⁸⁷ Cf. BALA, *An Overview of Factors Causing the Problems Faced by Dalit Christians*, 35.

⁸⁸ Cf. PORWAL, *Caste and Conversion in India*, URL: <https://www.legalservicesindia.com/article/1521/Caste-and-Conversion-in-India.html> [accessed: 17.07.2023]. Cf. also MARIA SUSAI, *Struggle of Dalit Christians within and outside the Church*, 75.

⁸⁹ Cf. AMBEDKAR, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. *Writings and speeches*, vol. 5, 459.

toleration of these caste practices among the converted Christians was also an expression of its empathy with human sensibilities.⁹⁰ Briefly, the early Catholic Church and its missionaries regarded the caste system as merely a stratified social system, unrelated to religion.⁹¹

Robert de Nobili was always a proponent of caste distinctions among missionaries. He went to the extent of dividing the missionaries into Brahmin Sanyasis, who ministered to the high castes, and Pandara Swamis, who ministered to the lower castes and untouchables. Sanyasis never went to untouchables' houses for religious activities. They considered it just as unclean to minister to the lower castes.⁹² He also encouraged all the converted Christians to be like the *Brahmins* in the Hindu religion. He even went one step further and created separate churches for the Christians of the upper castes and those of the lower castes.⁹³ Thus, it is clear from these examples that discrimination against untouchables was rooted in the very process of conversion by foreign missionaries.

2.2.3 The different Rites and their Caste Identities

The practice of discrimination continues to this day in the Kerala region. In the state of Kerala, where Christians make up the majority, the caste division is clear in different Rites. The Syrian Christians, who believe their lineage can be traced back to the apostle St. Thomas, were originally Brahmin and Nayar upper caste converts.⁹⁴ Despite their conversion, they continued to view themselves as belonging to a higher caste. Initially, they were not subject to the authority of the Pope or Catholic teachings. They followed their own customs and rituals. When the Portuguese Catholic missionaries came and converted the fishing people of the Coromandel coast, these Syrian Christians did not accept them as their fellow Christians. While the Syrian Christians followed their own rite, these converted Catholic Christians followed the Latin rite.⁹⁵ The Catholic Christians who followed the Latin rite were considered as low caste and they were not

⁹⁰ Cf. BALA, An Overview of Factors Causing the Problems Faced by Dalit Christians, 36.

⁹¹ Cf. MOCHERLA, Dalit Christians in South India, 108.

⁹² Cf. WEBSTER, The Dalit Christians: A History, 30–32.

⁹³ Cf. MOCHERLA, Dalit Christians in South India, 108.

⁹⁴ Cf. DUMONT, Homo Hierarchicus, 208.

⁹⁵ Cf. AMBEDKAR, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Writings and speeches, vol. 5, 435.

allowed in the churches of the Syrian Christians. The Syrian Christians never had any contact with the Latin Rite Catholics because they were converted from a lower caste.⁹⁶

From the above incidents, it is so clear that caste discrimination in the Catholic Church existed from the very beginning of conversion. The Catholic missionaries from Europe were mainly concerned with converting people and never bothered about the caste system. Even they deliberately decided that there was no need to change the social status of the converted Christians. They could remain as they were. Such a missionary approach opened the way for caste discrimination and violence even within the Catholic Church.

2.3 Caste Discrimination in the Early Period

Discrimination against Christian-Untouchables began from the very beginning of the conversion process. This discrimination against the Christian-Untouchables has taken a concrete form and has become a strong reality in various places in the Catholic Church. Let us look at some concrete examples of discrimination.

In 1571, separate masses were arranged for the Christian-Untouchables and the upper caste Christians at a place called Pallurithy in Kerala. The so-called ‘Thomas Christians’, who were converts from the upper caste, celebrated Christmas on 25th December and the Latin Christians, converts from the lower caste, celebrated Christmas mass on 26th December. The upper caste Christians did not want to celebrate Christmas mass with the Latin Christians, the Christian-Untouchables. The upper caste converted Christians wanted to have the first place in the church and at the same time they did not consider the lower caste converted Christians as their brothers and sisters.⁹⁷ They have maintained a kind of inequality and a hierarchy.

In 1847, the first Christian community was established in Gujrat. From the outset, casteism and discrimination were present. The Christians of the upper caste did not like to celebrate the Easter mass with the Christians of the lower caste. This was even expressed by a famous Gujrati writer, Manilal C. Parek, in the following words: ‘Spiritual fellowship is sufficient without the need for social intercourse with people

⁹⁶ Mary John MARIA SUSAI, *The Dalit Christian Liberation Movement*, in: *Dalit Movements in South India. Problems and Challenges*, ed. by M. Thangaraj, Chennai 2007, 105 – 152, here: 110.

⁹⁷ Cf. MARIA SUSAI, *Struggle of Dalit Christians within and outside the Church*, 75.

of different caste origin.’ These words are a clear expression of the aversion and hatred of the upper caste Christians towards the lower castes.⁹⁸

The Cathedral Church of the Diocese of Trichy in Tamil Nadu was built between 1839 and 1841. The Cathedral was built with a caste barrier. The untouchable Christians were allocated a separate place in the cathedral church and they cannot sit near the upper caste Christians. There was a partition between the two caste groups.⁹⁹ The above examples are the clearest evidence that the untouchables were discriminated against even within the Church. The caste discrimination that began in the very process of conversion became very strong after conversion.

2.4 Common Discriminatory Practices in Modern Times

A study was conducted by a Jesuit priest and sociologist, Fr. Antony Raj SJ, entitled ‘Discrimination against the Christian-Untouchables in Tamil Nadu.’ This study was initiated in 1988 and published on 9 August 1992. The findings of this study highlight the following discriminatory practices within the Catholic Church¹⁰⁰.

Building of two separate churches, one for the upper castes and the other for the untouchables. Liturgical services are celebrated separately in some parishes. Provision of separate sections of seating within the same church. In a cross-structured church, the untouchables are usually allowed to sit in the two sides and they are not allowed to sit in the centre wing of the Church. The untouchables should sit on the floor only, even if there are benches or chairs. Some parishes still keep two separate cemeteries and use two separate hearses to carry the dead. There are two separate lines to receive Christ’s Sacred Body. In some places, untouchables are ordered to receive communion only after other members of the upper castes have received it. Untouchable children are not allowed to be altar servers and untouchables are not allowed to be lectors in the sacred liturgy. The upper caste Christians restrict the Corpus Christi procession, Palm Sunday procession and other processions in the parish to the limits of their own streets. Even today, these processions are not allowed to enter the streets where untouchable Christians live. The untouchables are not invited to take part in the ceremony of washing the feet on Holy Thursday. Parish councils decide not to collect

⁹⁸ Cf. MARIA SUSAI, *The Dalit Christian Liberation Movement*, 111.

⁹⁹ Cf. BALA, *An Overview of Factors Causing the Problems Faced by Dalit Christians*, 36.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 37.

financial contributions from untouchables for fear that they will demand equal participation in the parish patron saint's feast. In some parishes, the feast of the village patron saint is celebrated separately. One day is reserved for the upper caste and another for the untouchables.¹⁰¹

These discriminatory practices are not only found in Tamil Nadu, but also in every diocese across India and they are still common in some of the parishes and villages even to this day. These discriminatory practices were so cruel and violent and denied the basic dignity of Christian-Untouchables.

2.5 The Ecclesiastical Response to Caste Discrimination within the Church

The presence of God in the Church was denied by the caste discrimination that existed in the Church from the beginning of conversion. Through social awakening and self-awareness, the Church came to realize that it remained rooted in the hierarchical system of caste.¹⁰² Some efforts have also been made by the Church as a whole to do away with these discriminations within the Church.

2.5.1 Pondicherry Synod and All-India Seminar against Caste and its Discrimination

First in the history of the Indian Catholic Church, the Pondicherry Synod, held in 1844¹⁰³, was organized to promote harmony between the Christians of the lower castes and the higher castes.¹⁰⁴ In post-independence India, the all-India Seminar in 1969 discussed the problem of caste in the Indian Catholic Church for the first time and stated that it should be eradicated.¹⁰⁵ After this all-India seminar, the CBCI - the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India - issued a strong directive and taught people to avoid caste discrimination within the Church. Now we see the important teachings of CBCI against caste discrimination.

¹⁰¹ Arul DOSS, Discrimination Against Dalits by Christians, in: SAR News, (19–25 September 1992). URL: http://indianhope.free.fr/site_eng/article_5.php3 [accessed: 23.07.2023].

¹⁰² Cf. RAJA, The Problem of Caste within the Church, 35.

¹⁰³ Cf. PORWAL, Caste and Conversion in India, URL: <http://www.legalservicesindia.com/1521/Cate-and-Conversion-in-India.html> [accessed: 17.07.23].

¹⁰⁴ CBCI, Policy of Dalit Empowerment in the Catholic Church in India, 12.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. RAJA, The Problem of Caste within the Church, 35.

2.5.2 Caste is the Counter sign of Gospel Values

Since 1970, CBCI conferences have made strong statements against caste discrimination and have encouraged Catholics in India to eradicate casteism within the Church. The CBCI meeting held in Mangalore in 1978 came out with a strong statement saying that caste discrimination when practiced within the church itself becomes a counter-sign to Gospel values.¹⁰⁶

2.5.3 Caste is the Denial of Christianity and Violation of Human Dignity

The CBCI annual meeting held in Trichy, Tamil Nadu in 1982 made the strongest statement ever regarding caste discrimination. It stated that caste with its consequent effect of discrimination is a denial of Christianity because it is inhuman. Caste discrimination is a violation of the God-given dignity and equality of the human person.¹⁰⁷ Human dignity and respect are therefore due to every human being and any denial of this is a sin against God and man. This CBCI conference also urged Catholics to participate meaningfully in the Eucharist, discarding caste mindsets and sentiments. It also openly acknowledged the intolerability of caste being the determining factor in the membership of pastoral and parish councils and other associations. What is worse is that caste plays an important role in the appointment of ecclesiastical personnel and in the posts in the dioceses and in the religious congregations. This has also been the subject of condemnation by this CBCI conference in 1982.¹⁰⁸

2.5.4 Caste is Contrary to Gospel Message of Love

The General Assembly of the CBCI in 1988 declared its position by stating that the top priority of the Indian Catholic Church is to abolish caste within the Church and to integrate the Christian-Untouchables into the mainstream. It also determined that caste discrimination is contrary to the Gospel message of love and brotherhood and sisterhood of mankind.¹⁰⁹ At the CBCI meeting in Varanasi in 1998, it was stated that even in the 20th century, the prevalence of caste and its discrimination in some parts

¹⁰⁶ Cf. MARIA SUSAI, *Struggle of Dalit Christians within and outside the Church*, 78.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. WILFRED (ed.), *Leave the Temple. Indian Paths to Human Liberation*, 186.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. RAJA, *The Problem of Caste within the Church*, 36.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 36.

of the Church is a disgrace to the whole Church. It is an expression of our inability to live our Christian faith and against the basic teachings of Christ.¹¹⁰

2.5.5 Dalit Policy for the Empowerment of Christian-Untouchables

In addition to the CBCI, the Bishops' Conferences of each state have made efforts and issued some guidelines to eradicate caste discrimination in each local church. As culmination of these efforts, in 2016, the CBCI issued the 'Policy of Dalit¹¹¹ Empowerment in the Catholic Church in India'. With this policy, the CBCI has invited every individual of the Catholic Church to go through a process of *metanoia* (repentance) and to experience the joy of the Easter. In order to eradicate caste discrimination in the Church, this policy also invites everyone to transform their minds and hearts individually, collectively, and structurally.¹¹² After pointing out the various efforts made by the Catholic Church in the last four decades, this policy invites everyone to build God's kingdom here on earth, especially in the Indian context, without any caste prejudices and inclinations.¹¹³

2.6 Caste discrimination in the Catholic Church today

After all these efforts and measures taken by the Church to eradicate caste discrimination and caste mindedness within the Church, we are still seeing discrimination and violence based on caste in the Catholic Church. Here I would like to bring to our knowledge the recent act of discrimination which took place in one of the parishes in Tamil Nadu.

2.6.1 Caste Discrimination in a Catholic Village of Tamil Nadu

On 23 February 2023, the Christian-Untouchables of Ayyampatty parish in the Trichy diocese lodged a complaint of caste discrimination at the nearby police station. Their complaint was that they were victims of caste discrimination at the hands of upper caste Christians. There are about 200 Catholic families in this parish. Among these 200 families, 70 families are from lower castes. During the parish feast of St. Mary

¹¹⁰ Cf. MARIA SUSAI, Struggle of Dalit Christians within and outside the Church. 79.

¹¹¹ 'Dalit' is another word that is used to refer to the untouchables in the Indian society. Dalits and Untouchables are one and the same.

¹¹² CBCI, Policy of Dalit Empowerment in the Catholic Church in India, 6

¹¹³ Cf. Ibid., 7.

Magdalene, these 70 untouchable families are deliberately excluded from the feast. Only those belonging to the upper castes are considered to be members of the parish, and only from them is the feast money collected. Collecting money from the lower castes is intentionally avoided. This is because if the money is collected from the lower castes, the festival chariot will have to pass through their streets as well. So, in order to avoid this, they did not collect the feast money from the untouchables and they did not pass through the streets of the untouchables. The upper caste people have the caste mindset and inclinations and they feel that if the festival chariot goes through the streets of the untouchables, it would be unclean and they also do not like to go through the streets of the untouchables. In the Parish Community Hall, where all the members of the Parish can hold their family functions and celebrations, the Untouchables are not allowed to hold any of their family functions there. Only the upper caste people have access to the hall for their family functions. Even though so many complaints have been lodged with the diocese, nothing has been done to put an end to this discrimination. Finally, the affected and discriminated Christian-Untouchables decided to complain to the civil authorities.¹¹⁴ This is just one example to prove that even in the 21st century there is still caste discrimination within the Catholic Church in India. There are also many discriminatory issues that continue on a daily basis to this day in the Catholic Church all over India.

2.6.2 Direct Discrimination and Structural Discrimination

All these sorts of discriminations can be considered as direct discrimination against an individual or a group, perpetrated by an identifiable individual or group. Because of the efforts made by the Church during these five decades, the rate of this direct discrimination is reduced in number. Today we see this kind of direct discriminations only in some part of the Church. But in today's context, it would be essential to be aware of another form of discrimination, which is still existing and dominant. We can refer to this form of discrimination as structural discrimination. This discrimination is also directed against an individual or a group, but the perpetrator of the discrimination

¹¹⁴ Venkatesan TN., Despite conversion, discrimination continues; Dalit Christians not allowed to attend Church festivals, in: Organizer. Voice of the Nation, (23 February 2023). URL:<https://organiser.org/2023/02/26/161702/bharat/tamil-nadu-despite-conversion-discrimination-continues-dalit-christians-not-allowed-to-attend-church-festivals/> [accessed: 28.07.2023].

cannot be clearly identifiable. Rather, it is caused by unequal structures.¹¹⁵ Discrimination against Christian-Untouchables persists because of the unequal structure that still exists in the Catholic Church due to the casteism. Here I would like to illustrate how this structural discrimination works in the Catholic Church in India.

2.6.3 The Presence of Structural Discrimination in Indian Catholic Church today

After the European missionaries, Indian clergy and religious came to the position of authority in the Catholic Church on the eve of the 19th century. The fact is that in these 150 years, very few from the untouchable Christian origin have reached the position of authority. They have been deliberately neglected and excluded from ecclesiastical leadership. Statistics show that out of the 19 million Christians of the Indian Catholic Church, 12 million are Christian-Untouchables.¹¹⁶ Though the Christian-Untouchables are the majority in the Indian Catholic Church, but they are very less in the hierarchical positions. This is what the statistics say: Among the 6 cardinals from India, there is only one from the Christian-Untouchables, that too in the 150-year history, a cardinal from the Christian-Untouchables was appointed by Pope Francis only in 2022. Out of 175 bishops, only 12 are from the Christian untouchable background and out of 31 archbishops, only 2 are from the untouchable background. The same situation also exists in religious congregations. In all religious congregations of both men and women, only the priests and nuns of the higher castes are in the major position in the hierarchy. These conditions are clear evidences of the dominance of the 30% of upper caste people over the 70% of lower caste people who are the majority in the Indian Catholic Church. This type of discrimination is called as structural discrimination. Here the Christian-Untouchables are discriminated against and the perpetrators are unknown, but the unequal structure within the church is the cause of this kind of discrimination.

2.6.4 Concrete Example of Structural Discrimination

Here I would like to give a concrete example of this structural discrimination that took place in the Tamil Nadu region. After the retirement of the former Archbishop of the

¹¹⁵ Sudhir SELVARAJ, Recognising structural forms of violence against Christians in India, in: LSE South Asia Centre, (3 November 2017). URL: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/southasia/2017/11/03/recognising-structural-forms-of-violence-against-christians-in-india/> [accessed: 06.08.2023].

¹¹⁶ CBCI, Policy of Dalit Empowerment in the Catholic Church in India, 129.

Archdiocese of Pondicherry, where the majority of the population is Christian-Untouchables (about 75%), there was a natural demand from the priests and the lay people to appoint an Archbishop from the untouchable background. Throughout the 135-year existence of the Archdiocese of Pondicherry, there has never been an appointment of an archbishop from the Christian untouchable background. Since most of the Christians come from the untouchable background, there was a natural demand for an archbishop from that background. The Dalit Christian Liberation Movement (DCLM)¹¹⁷ conducted so many protests and meetings for the appointment of an archbishop from the Christian untouchable community. Even the DCLM movement met the Apostolic Nuncio of India with a request for the appointment of an archbishop from the Christian untouchable background. Nothing was heard and in fact a bishop from an upper caste background, belonging to the diocese of Meerut in North India, was appointed as the Archbishop of Pondicherry. When the Apostolic Nuncio spoke to this protest group of the DCLM, he told them that Rome has nothing to do with the appointment of a particular bishop. It only selects the name from the list that is proposed by the Episcopal Conference of Tamil Nadu. So, the Tamil Nadu Bishops' Conference should propose a person from the untouchable background to be made a Bishop or Archbishop. This point clearly indicates that since most of the bishops are from the upper caste, they are strategically neglecting to nominate a person from the Christian-Untouchables to become a bishop.¹¹⁸

At the same time, we see the other side, when the diocese called Kuzhithurai, in Tamil Nadu, was vacant, the people and the clergy of that diocese asked for a bishop from a particular caste, which is dominant in that area and is also an upper caste. A bishop from that caste was appointed to that diocese. In the same way, for the diocese of Tuticorin, the expected bishop was appointed from that upper caste. So, where a particular caste is dominant and it is also an upper caste, there is no problem in appointing a bishop of that same caste in that area. When it comes to the case of the untouchables, where they are more in number, it is not possible to do it. And the voice of the Christian-Untouchables is not heard. The demand of the Christian-Untouchables is least bothered.

¹¹⁷ Dalit Christian Liberation Movement was founded in 1990 by a group of lay Christian Untouchables. Their aim was to fight casteism in the Catholic Church and to secure equal rights for Dalits.

¹¹⁸ Felix WILFRED, A Dalit cardinal can help end casteism in Indian Church, in: Jeevadhara (2014), 76–78, here: 78.

CBCI's Dalit policy claims that the empowerment of Christian-Untouchables is the main objective and task of the Indian Catholic Church.¹¹⁹ But when there is a deliberate opportunity for implementation, the church does not. What is the reason for that? The 'Dalit Policy' of the CBCI calls for a change of heart and mind on the part of everyone as individual, group, and structure for the annihilation of caste discrimination within the church. The change has taken place at the individual level and to some extent at the collective level, but the structural change has not yet taken place. The Bishops of India want to bring about a Church that is free from caste and its discriminations. Individually they all prefer a Church without caste. Collectively as CBCI they have made all efforts and policies to eradicate caste and discrimination. As an Episcopal Conference, they speak collectively against caste and its discrimination. But structurally, they have not been able to do so. The hidden unequal structure in the Church among the hierarchy does not allow them to be detached from this caste mindset. This structural discrimination only ensures that the high-caste bishops do not turn to the side of the untouchables and do not listen to their cries and miseries. Since they are not subjected to the same discrimination as the untouchables, they do not realise the suffering and plight of the untouchables.

2.7 Conclusion

From the facts and evidences mentioned above, we can conclude that the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables has not been confined to a particular decade or a few years. It has been present from the moment of conversion to the present day. If we look at the history of the Indian Catholic Church, it is nothing but the five hundred years of suffering of the Christian-Untouchables. The converted Christians from the untouchable background came with a great hope and expectation that they would be able to regain the dignity they had lost in Hinduism. But what happened was that they were again discriminated against in Christianity and their condition became even worse.

It is in this miserable situation that the new political theology of Johann Baptist Metz will shed a new light on the life of the Indian church itself and on its theological thinking. In the context of religious pluralism, Indian Catholic theology has so far engaged mainly in inter-religious dialogue. In the ambience of religious pluralism, it

¹¹⁹ CBCI, Policy of Dalit Empowerment in the Catholic Church in India, 6.

has shown itself to the whole Catholic Church as a true witness to the Gospel. But above all, it has forgotten to look at itself and has failed to address the problem of casteism. It is here that the intention of this thesis is to use the political theology of Metz in the Indian context to bring about a new vision of the Indian Catholic Church as a whole and to give a new perspective to its theological orientation.

The political theology of Metz considers human beings collectively as a ‘Subject’ before God.¹²⁰ This Subject is not an isolated person, but the subject is the person in the wave of the community. As a Subject, each person is connected in humanness to each other and has become a responsible person.¹²¹ It is this very connected nature of us as human beings that makes a claim on every one of us to show our solidarity in our actions. Subjects are therefore called to act humanely for the good of others, and to be on the side of the victims.¹²² As a Subject, each one should stand up for all human beings in the face of violent oppression and should show solidarity in the face of violent suppression by the masses or of institutionalised hatred.¹²³ As Indian Catholic Christians, we are ‘subjects’ who are connected to each other. When someone is suffering from caste discrimination, it is our concern and our duty to stand with them and to fight against this violence in order to restore the dignity of the Christian untouchable. After this brief understanding of the political theology of Metz, we move on to the next chapter for a more detailed treatment of it.

¹²⁰ Cf. METZ, *Faith in History & Society. Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*, 46.

¹²¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, *Faith in History & Society. Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*, 60–62.

¹²² John K. DOWNEY, (ed.), *Love’s Strategy: The Political Theology of Johann Baptist Metz*, Harrisburg Pa 999, 6–7.

¹²³ Cf. METZ, *Faith in History & Society. Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*, 47.

CHAPTER 3

THE DANGEROUS MEMORY OF THE CHRISTIAN- UNTOUCHABLES AND *MEMORIA PASSIONIS* OF JESUS CHRIST

3.1 Introduction

In the last chapter we had a detailed look at the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables from the beginning of the conversion till today. The Christian-Untouchables have been deprived of their human dignity and have not been treated as brothers and sisters. In this situation, as I have briefly mentioned in the conclusion of the previous chapter, the political theology of Johann Baptist Metz awakens the consciousness of every Indian Catholic Christian as subjects before God to respond to the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables. To understand how Metz's political theology demands a response from every Indian Catholic, it is first necessary to have a clear sketch of Metz's political theology. In this chapter, therefore, we will begin by looking in some detail at the political theology of Metz. Then, we will see how Metz's political theology makes the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables a dangerous memory and thus calls each Catholic individual, as a subject before God, to act against caste discrimination and oppression.

3.2 The New Political Theology and its *Logos*

Metz, when he gave an interview to *Aachener Zeitung*, he says:

Political theology is a theology and nothing else. It is an attempt to speak of God in these times, that is to talk about God while facing the world, with all its social and historical challenges.¹²⁴

This answer of Metz gives the basic understanding of what his political theology is. Metz's political theology is an attempt to speak about God in the modern world amid its social and historical crisis.¹²⁵ Metz's Political Theology, then, is nothing less than talking about God in our time. He developed his political theology as a criticism of situational theologies, which were idealistically closed and perpetually barricaded

¹²⁴ Johann Baptist METZ, *Remembering and Resisting. The new Political Theology* [trans. and ed. by John K. DOWNEY], Oregon 2022. 75.

¹²⁵ Cf. METZ, *Remembering and Resisting. The new Political Theology*, 53.

from history and society.¹²⁶ It is here that he speaks of the three main theological models of his time.

3.2.1 Political theology as a criticism on the existing theological models in the church

According to Metz, three competing theological models are operating in the Catholic Church. They are neo-scholastic theology, transcendental-idealist theology, and post-idealist theology. They are very different and reflect the complexity and tensions of the Church's present situation. The neo-scholastic view is still prominent in the Church as a whole. Neo-Scholastic theology takes a strong defensive position when challenged by the modern world and crises. Second, Metz argues that transcendental-idealist theology used the Church Fathers and the Scholastics to engage productively with modern challenges. Modern challenges such as the crisis of subjectivity in classical metaphysics, German idealism and existentialism, the social process of secularisation, and scientific developments were confronted by transcendental-idealist theology. According to Metz, it was this transcendental-idealist theology that provided the impetus for the Second Vatican Council.¹²⁷

However, Metz is of the opinion that neither of these theological models adequately faces and deals with modern challenges and crises. So, he mentions a third theological model that rightly confronts the modern challenges and crises and develops the theological competence of the church. He calls this theological model as post-idealist theology. In Metz's view, this model of theology finds its realisation in the political theology of Europe and in the liberation theology of South America.¹²⁸ This post-idealist theology regards the modern challenges as *logos* or roots of theology. Metz identifies these challenges as three interruptions or irruptions.¹²⁹ These three interruptions of modern times are the foundations for the development of his new political theology.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ Johann Baptist METZ, *A Passion for God. The Mystical–Political Dimension of Christianity* [trans. by Matthew ASHLEY], New York 1998, 23.

¹²⁷ Johann Baptist METZ – Jürgen MOLTSMANN, *Faith and the Future. Essays on Theology, Solidarity and Modernity* (Concilium Series), New York 1995, 49–50.

¹²⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ Cf. METZ, *A Passion for God. The Mystical–Political Dimension of Christianity*, 24.

¹³⁰ Cf. DOWNEY, (ed.), *Love's Strategy: The Political Theology of Johann Baptist Metz*, 125.

3.2.2 Three Interruptions that formed New Political Theology

Metz identifies three crises of modern time as the three interruptions that have led to new ways of doing theology, i.e., post-idealist theology. He mentions them as the crisis of the Enlightenment, the crisis of Auschwitz and the crisis of the polycentric world-view of the Church.¹³¹ These three crises were not properly addressed by neo-scholastic and transcendental-idealist theology. According to Metz these crises were appropriately addressed by post-idealist theology.

3.2.2.1 *The Interruption by Enlightenment*

Because of the Enlightenment's ideological and social criticism, theology ends its historical and social innocence. The crisis of the Enlightenment has led post-idealist theology to attempt to establish a new relationship with history and society.¹³² As if theology had nothing to do with history, it cannot leave history to a separate historical theology. Nor should it consider society as a separate domain of social ethics or the social teaching of the Church.¹³³ Here Metz warns the privatisation of theology. The privatisation of theology does not perceive the existence of the people to whom it is addressed. These privatised theologies consider human beings as theologies of the subject. However, they do not place the human person in a social and political context. Human beings are seen in these theologies as isolated from their society and from history.¹³⁴ In contrast to these privatised theologies, the new political theology of Metz sees the human person as the subject of theology in relation to other beings and before God in the society and in history.¹³⁵

The new political theology takes up the epistemological challenge that is posed by Marxism on the question of the truth. According to Marx, all forms of knowledge are conditioned by interest.¹³⁶ Interests can be qualified as true if they are universal and relate to all men. Only this true interest will be the source of true knowledge. In this sense, the new political theology speaks of a universal interest, which is founded in the biblical traditions themselves. This universal interest, according to the new

¹³¹ Cf. METZ, *A Passion for God. The Mystical–Political Dimension of Christianity*, 33.

¹³² Cf. METZ – MOLTMANN, *Faith and the Future. Essays on Theology, Solidarity and Modernity*, 49–50.

¹³³ Cf. DOWNEY, (ed.), *Love's Strategy: The Political Theology of Johann Baptist Metz*, 126.

¹³⁴ Cf. METZ, *Faith in History & Society. Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*, 58–59.

¹³⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 61.

¹³⁶ Cf. METZ, *A Passion for God. The Mystical–Political Dimension of Christianity*, 34.

political theology, is the hunger and thirst for justice. It is justice for all, for the living and the dead, for the suffering of the past and of the present. In this respect the New Political Theology maintains that the question of truth and the question of justice are related to each other. To seek truth means to seek strictly universal justice.¹³⁷

The new political theology adopts the other Marxist idea. Marxism thinks of the world as a history. The world as a historical project in which human beings become the subjects of their own history. The new political theology understands itself as a theology of the history. The New Political Theology emphasises that the history of the world is the same as the history of Christianity. They are not different histories, they are the same history, that is the history of salvation. The history of salvation of which theology speaks is also the history of the world, which is marked by a hope for universal justice that is constantly threatened and contested, but nevertheless indestructible. In salvation history there is always hope for justice for those who suffer in the present and those who suffered in the past. It is in this sense that the New Political Theology insists that the history of the world, like the Christian salvation history, has an eschatological hope for justice.¹³⁸ Thus the interruption of the Enlightenment paved the way for the development of a new political theology. The New Political Theology of Metz places the human being at the centre of its theology, related to other human beings before God.

3.2.2.2 The Interruption by the Catastrophe of Auschwitz

Posi-idealist theology was also shaped by the interruption of the Auschwitz catastrophe.¹³⁹ This theology is not metaphysically indifferent to what has happened, but rather bears witness to historical truth. The catastrophe of Auschwitz turns the historical and political conscience of theology away from the singularity of history and towards the plurality of histories of suffering.¹⁴⁰ There will be no meaning in history if one turns back to Auschwitz and is saved; there will be no truth in history if one can defend it with one's back turned to Auschwitz; there will be no God of history whom one can worship with one's back turned to Auschwitz.¹⁴¹ So, theology should make a

¹³⁷ Cf. Ibid., 36.

¹³⁸ Cf. Ibid., 36–37.

¹³⁹ Cf. METZ – MOLTMANN, Faith and the Future. Essays on Theology, Solidarity and Modernity, 49–50.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. DOWNEY, (ed.), Love's Strategy: The Political Theology of Johann Baptist Metz, 128.

¹⁴¹ Cf. METZ, A Passion for God. The Mystical–Political Dimension of Christianity, 39–40.

turn, a turn that brings us face to face with the suffering and the victims. Metz calls this theology a new political theology. This new political theology is critical of the apathy of theological idealism and of its lack of sensitivity to the historical and political catastrophe.¹⁴²

After Auschwitz, political theology became not a theology of systems, but a theology of human subjects with a practical basis. This theology formulates the ancient theodicy question in its oldest and most controversial form, not existentially but politically. It speaks of the emancipation of the victims of history. It repeatedly brings this theodicy question into a political consciousness as an accusation and develops the concept of direct solidarity with the victims of history.¹⁴³

3.2.2.3 The Interruption by Socially and Culturally Polycentric World

The third interruption that Metz considers here and that constitutes post-idealist theology is the culturally and socially polycentric world. This interruption puts an end to the culturally monocentric theology of Europe.¹⁴⁴ The culturally and socially polycentric worldview is an imperative for the new theological approach. The polycentric worldview brings many social conflicts from different parts of the world into the centre of ecclesial and theological consciousness. Social conflicts such as oppression, exploitation and racism in the polycentric world are contrary to the values of the Gospel. They also become a challenge for theology.¹⁴⁵ They demand that the faith be formulated in terms of resistance and of transformation. In this way, theology is forced by its very *logos* to become political.¹⁴⁶

In the culturally and socially polycentric world, the new political theology sees the poor churches of the world. These poor churches are seen as the one, undivided discipleship of Jesus by the new political theology. These churches, nourished by the discipleship of the poor, homeless and obedient Jesus, embrace political spirituality with its preferential option for the poor. For discipleship of Jesus includes the mystical and the political. In this sense, it is always in these poor churches of the world that the new political theology finds the mystical-political experience of suffering.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴² Cf. DOWNEY, (ed.), *Love's Strategy: The Political Theology of Johann Baptist Metz*, 129.

¹⁴³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 129.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. METZ – MOLTSMANN, *Faith and the Future. Essays on Theology, Solidarity and Modernity*, 50.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. METZ, *A Passion for God. The Mystical–Political Dimension of Christianity*, 42–43.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. DOWNEY, (ed.), *Love's Strategy: The Political Theology of Johann Baptist Metz*, 130.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. METZ, *A Passion for God. The Mystical–Political Dimension of Christianity*, 44–45.

These three interruptions provide the impulse for a paradigm shift in theology. Thus, Metz concludes that the new theology that perceives these three crises as fundamental crises of theology and seeks to overcome them through productive reduction is a new political theology.¹⁴⁸ Having seen what Metz's New Political Theology is, let us now look at some of the key concepts that Metz has developed to implement his New Political Theology. These key concepts of Metz's New Political Theology will help us in the application of this theology in the Indian context for the annihilation of the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables.

3.3 The Key Concepts of New Political Theology of Metz

There are many important key concepts in the new political theology of Metz. I have tried to group them under two headings. In the first heading we will see the praxis and the subject of Metz's new political theology, and in the second we will see the three key tools of Metz's new political theology.

3.3.1 Praxis and Subject

The main concepts in Metz' new political theology are the praxis and the subject.¹⁴⁹ To understand Metz's new political theology, it is extremely important to begin with a clear understanding of these two concepts. First, we see here what is praxis in Metz's new political theology.

3.3.1.1 The Primacy of Praxis in New Political Theology

For Metz, praxis is the practical foundation of all Christian theologies. Metz's new political theology does not treat theory and praxis in the usual order. Usually, praxis is seen as the continuation, implementation, or concrete application of a predefined theory. But the practical fundamental theology opposes the subordination of praxis to theory and emphasizes the primacy of praxis. Metz' new political theology operates under the primacy of praxis. The new political theology of Metz does not have as its basis pure theory and ideas, but rather a practical structure. It is this practical structure that constitutes the *Logos* of all the Christian theology. In the biblical context, the idea of God is not a theoretical one, but it is a practical one. The stories of conversion and

¹⁴⁸ Cf. DOWNEY, (ed.), *Love's Strategy: The Political Theology of Johann Baptist Metz*, 125.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. METZ, *Faith in History & Society. Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*, 50.

the Exodus event do not serve to enhance an already-conceived theology. On the contrary, they form the basic structure of theology. In the same way, the practice of imitating Christ is a constitutive part of Christology. Christology is nourished by the practice of imitation of Christ. In other words, the whole of Christology is subject to the primacy of the praxis of imitation. Metz refers to this as the Christological dialectic or the dialectic of imitation. For Metz, the New Testament stories of imitation are appellative and imperative. They transform the hearers and make them ready to imitate Christ. Christology is thus not transmitted as a concept, but as the imitation of Christ.¹⁵⁰

Therefore, according to Metz, praxis is primary in doing theology. When Metz speaks of the primacy of praxis in the new political theology, he considers not only the moral aspect of praxis, but also the social aspect of praxis. This praxis must be not only moral but also social. This means that praxis must be morally oriented and socially engaged.¹⁵¹ Metz says that there are also conditions and situations in which an individual human being does not have control over what is happening around him.¹⁵² There, he or she is socially conditioned by oppression and powerlessness. This oppression is an important object in this praxis of the new political theology.¹⁵³ In this situation of oppression and powerlessness the praxis of theology has a social aspect.

3.3.1.2 The Subject

Having seen the primacy of praxis in Metz's new political theology, let us now move on to the concept of subject. The new political theology of Metz holds that religion is not a social constitution of the identity of human subject. Rather, it is added to human identity itself.¹⁵⁴ It is in this sense Metz says that every human being become a subject in the presence of God.¹⁵⁵ An individual cannot be a subject in isolation. It is always through and with others that the individual becomes a subject.¹⁵⁶ To be a subject is to be a person of responsibility, to be a person bound to humanity. The call to be a subject lead everyone to honor the other as a subject and to empower the other. The very

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Ibid., 50–52.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Ibid., 54.

¹⁵² Cf. DOWNEY, (ed.), *Love's Strategy: The Political Theology of Johann Baptist Metz*, 6.

¹⁵³ Cf. METZ, *Faith in History & Society. Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*, 54.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Ibid., 33.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Ibid., 46.

¹⁵⁶ Gaspar MARTINEZ, *Confronting the Mystery of God. Political, Liberation, and Public Theologies*, New York 2001, 73.

connectedness to others demands the individual to show connectedness in their actions. To put it another way, the claim to be a subject call everyone to be a doer and an actor, a subject, and an agent, and not just a passive object.¹⁵⁷ Here Metz asserts that every human being, as a religious subject before God, has the religious duty to stand with other human beings who are suffering.¹⁵⁸

In the biblical framework, Metz also identifies human beings as subjects before God. In biblical religion, human beings are not individuals but subjects in the presence of their God. Biblically, subject does not refer to isolated individuals, but coexists with other subjects.¹⁵⁹ Metz argues that the faith stories of the Old and New and Testaments are not ancillary phenomena added to humanity. Rather, they constituted human beings as subjects by virtue of their relationship with God. In this sense, Metz insists that religion is not an additional phenomenon, but that it is an active process through which Israel has become a subject in the presence of God. The Old Testament tells us that it was the Exodus event that made the people a subject. The relationship with God does not humiliate human beings as subjects before God, but always forces them to be subjects in a state of danger.¹⁶⁰

Metz criticizes all personal modern theologies that speak of human existence without considering the political problem in which human existence exists. He calls such theologies abstract theologies that concentrate on the existential situation of the individual. These theologies are theologies of the subject, but they are separated from the subject, and it is only the new political theology that considers every human being as a collective subject in front of God and that speaks of their solidarity with one another.¹⁶¹ It is here that Metz sees the universal solidarity that existed among the subjects of the Bible as the fundamental category of new political theology.¹⁶²

3.4 The three important tools of Metz's Political theology

The three main tools that the new political theology of Metz uses are memory, narrative, and solidarity. These three main concepts are most important in Metz's new

¹⁵⁷ Cf. DOWNEY, (ed.), *Love's Strategy: The Political Theology of Johann Baptist Metz*, 6.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. METZ, *Faith in History & Society. Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*, 47.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 60–61.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 61.

¹⁶¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 62–63.

¹⁶² Cf. *Ibid.*, 61.

political theology when addressing true historical and social issues of our time.¹⁶³ Let us now examine these three concepts in detail.

3.4.1 Memory

The important key word in the new political theology of Metz is memory. Metz' new political theology stresses the importance of memory in human history and spirituality. He believes that all human experiences and spiritualities are grounded in the narrative of memory.¹⁶⁴ Metz says that it is only memory that gives human beings historical identity as individuals and as communities. It is through this memory that man comes to realise that he is the subject, together with other human beings, before God. This means that the identity of man as subject is formed when memory is awakened. But Metz also sees the negative side of this memory as well. The identity of the human subject in the context of history and society is lost when the memory of the human being is destroyed. In this context, Metz speaks of two categories of memories.¹⁶⁵

The first category of memory is the memory of the good old days. This memory does not take the past seriously because, in this memory, the past is an untroubled paradise. This memory also becomes a place to escape from the present disappointments. It is a selective memory, remembering only the triumph of the powerful and erasing the memories of the victims and the defeated.¹⁶⁶ Metz came to this idea through the influence of Walter Benajmin, one of the philosophers of the Frankfurt School.¹⁶⁷ Benjamin says that history is written by the victors and conquerors. The victors of history tell only the dominant and successful stories as history and reject the stories of the defeated and the dead. These successful and dominant narratives as history reinforce a status quo that benefits only those who are in power and have been privileged.¹⁶⁸ As opposed to the dominant 'official' history of the governing classes, which is composed from the perspective of the victors, Benjamin spoke of the need to 'blow up the continuum of history'.¹⁶⁹ Alongside the

¹⁶³ Steven OSTOVICH, *The Future of Political Theology – III. Time/Reason/ Subjectivity: Questions of Political Theology*. *Horizon* 34/2 (September 2007), 317–321, here: 308.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. METZ, *Faith in History & Society. Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*, 66.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, 109.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 193.

¹⁶⁸ Walter BENJAMIN, "On the Concept of History," in: *Selected Writings*, vol. 4, 1938 –1940, ed. by Howard EILAND – Michael W. JENNINGS [trans. by Edmund JEPHCOTT et al.], Cambridge 2003, 389–400, here: 391–392.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. BENJAMIN, *On the Concept of History*, 396.

history of the victors, Benjamin speaks of the tradition of the oppressed.¹⁷⁰ This idea of Benjamin's influenced Metz to speak of a different kind of memory, one that shatters the familiar through a radical recognition of the reality of human suffering.¹⁷¹ He calls this memory of suffering the dangerous memory, which makes demands on us.¹⁷² This concept of the dangerous memory was put forward for the first time in secular philosophy by Herbert Marcuse of the Frankfurt School.¹⁷³ The dangerous memory of the victims of history provides a meaningful insight into society,¹⁷⁴ and as a subversive memory it becomes dangerous because it questions the status quo of society and threatens those in position and authority, and brings hope to the victims.¹⁷⁵ Metz takes up Marcuse's idea of dangerous memory in his political theology. Metz explains this dangerous memory as follows:

There are memories in which earlier experiences break through to the centre-point of our lives and reveal new and dangerous insights for the present. They illuminate for a few moments and with a harsh steady light the questionable nature of things we have apparently come to terms with, and show up the banality of our supposed 'realism'. They break through the canon of the prevailing structures of plausibility and have certain subversive features. Such memories are like dangerous and incalculable visitations from the past. They are memories that we have to take into account, memories, as it were, with a future content.¹⁷⁶

In Metz's view, then, this dangerous memory does not look backwards but forwards. It calls into question the current status quo and radically challenges the present in the light of the future that God has promised.¹⁷⁷

3.4.2 *Memoria Passionis*-the dangerous memory of Christian faith

Metz's point here is that the Christian faith also has its roots in this kind of dangerous memory. This is where Metz's very famous concept comes in, the *memoria passionis* Jesu Christi, that is the suffering of Jesus Christ. Christianity, according to Metz, is

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Ibid., 392.

¹⁷¹ Riyako C. HIKOTA, The Eucharist as a Source of Political Action. Dorothy Day as a living example of Johann Baptist Metz's Dangerous Memory, in: The Expository Times 133/5 (February 2022), 185–191, here: 186.

¹⁷² Cf. METZ, Faith in History & Society. Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology, 109.

¹⁷³ Candace MCLEAN, Theology 101: Dangerous Memories, (December 11, 2015). URL: <https://dailytheology.org/2015/12/11/theology-101-dangerous-memories/>. [accessed: 16 November 2023].

¹⁷⁴ John MARSDEN, The Political Theology of Johannes Baptist Metz, in: The Heythrop Journal, LIII (2012), 440–452, here: 450

¹⁷⁵ Cf. METZ, Faith in History & Society. Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology, 193.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. Ibid., 109–110.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. Ibid., 200.

born of this dangerous memory.¹⁷⁸ Metz sees the *memoria passionis* as two-fold.¹⁷⁹ On the one hand, it anticipates the future as the future of those who are oppressed and condemned without hope.¹⁸⁰ On the other hand, it is the introduction of the memory of Jesus' freedom into contemporary society.¹⁸¹ *Memoria passionis* unites the narrative of Jesus with the narrative of the suffering of the victims of history. In the biblical understanding, the *memoria passionis* is a memory of suffering and it always includes the suffering of others, of strangers, even of enemies. It has opened the eyes to the suffering of others and to the suffering of the innocent. In Metz's view, in today's world of conflicts, the memory of the suffering of others should be at the forefront.¹⁸²

Metz says that the *memoria passionis* of Jesus is a subversively liberating memory within the apparent plausibility of our society. This memory, as a subversive remembrance, shocks us out of our reconciliation with the facts and tendencies of our modern times. This memory guarantees future freedom for those who suffer and are degraded as a faceless mass. This *memoria passionis* makes one free to suffer for those suffering.¹⁸³ This *memoria passionis* opens everyone to the passion and suffering of humanity. It enlightens every human being to the fact that the world is the history of human suffering.¹⁸⁴ For Metz, the suffering of Christ is the prototype of what is happening in society, especially to the poor and the oppressed. Christ's suffering shows the depth of suffering in the world. It is prophetic and critique of the triumphant ideologies of a society that talks about freedom, success and prosperity while oppressing the poor.¹⁸⁵

Metz articulates that a society, which does not have a place for the victims and the oppressed, does not have a real future.¹⁸⁶ In the context of *memoria passionis*, the Christian future is the future of those who suffer hopelessly in society, those who are oppressed and wounded. By including passion, suffering and victims, *memoria passionis* becomes a dangerous memory. As a dangerous memory, it confronts and

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Ibid., 109.

¹⁷⁹ Joas ADIPRASETYA, Johann Baptist Metz's *Memoria Passionis* and the Possibility of Political Forgiveness, in: political theology 18/3 (May 2017), 233–248, here: 237.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. METZ, Faith in History & Society. Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology, 90.

¹⁸¹ Cf. ADIPRASETYA, Johann Baptist Metz's *Memoria Passionis* and the Possibility of Political Forgiveness, 237–238.

¹⁸² Cf. DOWNEY, (ed.), Love's Strategy: The Political Theology of Johann Baptist Metz, 170.

¹⁸³ Cf. METZ – MOLTSMANN, Faith and the Future. Essays on Theology, Solidarity and Modernity, 9.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. METZ, Remembering and Resisting. The new Political Theology, 6.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. MARTINEZ, Confronting the Mystery of God. Political, Liberation, and Public Theologies, 65.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. METZ – MOLTSMANN, Faith and the Future. Essays on Theology, Solidarity and Modernity, 15.

unmasks the triumphant society by showing the injustice and the victims that it has created. As a subversive memory, it shows God's disruptive act of salvation in history. At the end of history, God will rescue those whom history has destroyed and forgotten: the defeated, the oppressed and the dead.¹⁸⁷

3.4.3 Narrative

In the new political theology of Metz, memory and narrative always come together. Metz acknowledges that memory is primarily a narrative, not an argument. In his view, the Bible is an example of this narration. He says that the Bible is the story of the people of Israel's experience of God. He also sees Christianity as a community remembering and narrating Jesus' passion, death, and resurrection.¹⁸⁸ Narrative is, first and foremost, the retelling of a concrete memory related to a fundamental experience. The primary aim of a narrative is not to convey some historical information to the listener. Rather, it aims to give the listener a concrete and relevant experience of the memory of that story.¹⁸⁹ Narrative has a practical effect because its content is related to the interest of those listening. It is here that the narrative becomes a liberating and relevant experience for the listener. In a theological sense, the narrative is not only an aid to the kerygmatic proclamation, but it also demands the enactment of this narrative in history.¹⁹⁰

3.4.4 Solidarity

Along with memory and narrative, solidarity is the third fundamental concept of Metz's new political theology. For Metz, solidarity seeks to express its redeeming and liberating power in the history of human suffering as a fundamental characteristic of theology. According to Metz, solidarity is a kind of help, support, and togetherness for the people those who are suffering. It is through this help, support, and togetherness that they can be lifted out of their acute suffering and threats.¹⁹¹ To Metz, solidarity is an action towards those who suffer and are threatened. This action enables them to regain their dignity. Through solidarity, Metz affirms the preferential option for the

¹⁸⁷ Cf. MARTINEZ, *Confronting the Mystery of God. Political, Liberation, and Public Theologies*, 66.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. METZ, *Faith in History & Society. Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*, 212.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. MARTINEZ, *Confronting the Mystery of God. Political, Liberation, and Public Theologies*, 63.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ Cf. METZ, *Faith in History & Society. Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*, 229.

suffering.¹⁹² Metz also brings here the interrelationship between memory, narrative, and solidarity. He says:

It is in this solidarity that memory and narrative (of salvation) acquire their specific mystical and political praxis. Without solidarity, memory and narrative cannot become practical categories of theology. In the same way, without memory and narrative, solidarity cannot express its practical humanizing form. It is only when they co-exist that memory, narrative and solidarity can effectively be categories of a practical fundamental theology.¹⁹³

In Metz's view, memory and narrative are the source of a new pathos in praxis. This praxis is carried out in the solidarity. Only in solidarity does memory and narrative become a practical category of theology. Conversely, it is only in memory and narrative that solidarity finds its practical form. By co-existing, these three key concepts become the fundamental keys of Metz's new Political Theology.

3.5 The Suffering of the Christian-Untouchables in the Light of Metz's New Political Theology

A paradigm shift in the theology of the Catholic Church in India is the need of the hour. Indian Catholic theology has hitherto defended the Christian faith in its religious pluralistic context as a neo-scholastic theology. As a transcendental-idealist theology, it has been engaged in dialogue with other religions and this interreligious dialogue with other religions has led to liturgical inculturation and respect for other faiths. In practice, however, it has failed to address the historical and social problem within the Indian church. As Metz says, post-idealistic theology takes up the challenges of the time and considers these problems as interruption to theology.

In this sense, caste discrimination and the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables must be the *Logos* or root of theology in the Indian Church. Thus, to face this serious challenge of casteism and its discrimination, the theology of the Catholic Church in India should be a post-idealist theology. In this regard, in dealing with caste discrimination and the suffering of Christian-Untouchables in the Indian Catholic Church, it would be very necessary and relevant to use the New Political Theology of Metz. In the first part of this chapter, we have sought to understand the New Political

¹⁹² Budi HERNAWAN, *Torture and Peacebuilding in Indonesia. The Case of Papua*, London 2017, 40.

¹⁹³ Cf. METZ, *Faith in History & Society. Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*, 229–230.

Theology of Metz. Now, with the help of new political theology of Metz, our aim is to address the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables in the Indian Catholic Church.

3.5.1 The Singularity of Auschwitz and the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables

Metz began doing theology after Auschwitz. According to Metz, turning back to the tragedy of Auschwitz and doing theology and talking about God and doing all religious rituals are empty and meaningless.¹⁹⁴ Metz puts Auschwitz at the center of his theology and at the center of the history of humanity. Without an engagement with Auschwitz, there can be no theology, and there can be no talk of God. In this way, Metz developed his political theology mainly from the perspective of Auschwitz.

If Auschwitz is seen as a crime of national socialism alone, and the Christian causality of Auschwitz is deliberately forgotten.¹⁹⁵ Here Metz speaks of the hazardous substitution theory of Christian theology, which had the intention of inheriting or ignoring the historical fate of Israel.¹⁹⁶ Metz argues that the theology of substitution theory is in a way responsible for Auschwitz's tragedy. It speaks of the church as the new Israel, where the old Israel no longer has any need of existence. In this context, Metz says here that theology after Auschwitz is not simply a matter of revision of Christian theology with relation to Judaism, but it is a matter of revision of Christian theology as a whole.¹⁹⁷

In this regard, Metz points out that theology after Auschwitz should be guided by the insight that the Christians can only form and understand their identity in the face of the Jews,¹⁹⁸ and that they can also protect their identity together with the history of the faith of the Jews.¹⁹⁹ Metz affirms that theology after Auschwitz must re-emphasize the Jewish dimension and overcome the forced erasure of Jewish heritage within Christianity.²⁰⁰ Metz believes that without the development of a 'theology after Auschwitz' there can be no real dismantling of Christian anti-Judaism.²⁰¹ According

¹⁹⁴ Cf. METZ, *A Passion for God. The Mystical–Political Dimension of Christianity*, 54.

¹⁹⁵ Cf. METZ – MOLTSMANN, *Faith and the Future. Essays on Theology, Solidarity and Modernity*, 44.

¹⁹⁶ Johann Baptist METZ, *Auschwitz. II. Theologisch*, in: *LThK*³ 1 ed. by Michael BUCHBERGER–Walter KASPER, Freiburg im Breisgau et al. ³1993-2001, 1261.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. METZ – MOLTSMANN, *Faith and the Future. Essays on Theology, Solidarity and Modernity*, 42.

¹⁹⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 38.

¹⁹⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 41.

²⁰⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 45.

²⁰¹ Cf. METZ, *Auschwitz. II. Theologisch*, 1261.

to Metz, the theology after Auschwitz emphasizes the singularity²⁰² of Auschwitz without reducing it to a negative myth.²⁰³ This is because the catastrophe of Auschwitz cannot simply be taken out of history, nor can it be stylized into a tragedy that is beyond history.²⁰⁴ A mythological indictment to this historical catastrophe would simply de-historicize Auschwitz, turn it into an incomprehensible fate. If Auschwitz is turned into an incomprehensible fate, then the real standpoint of responsibility, shame and repentance will be obliterated.²⁰⁵ However, Metz is left with the question: How can a horror that has repeatedly eluded historiographical comprehension be historicized? In other words, how can the catastrophe of Auschwitz, which repeatedly threatens to elude historical contemplation, be remembered?²⁰⁶ This can be achieved by a historiography that is supported by an *anamnestic* culture, a culture of remembering, a historiography that is also aware of the forgetting that still prevails in every historicizing objectification.²⁰⁷

²⁰² Jan–Heiner TÜCK, *Gottes Augapfel. Bruchstücke zu einer Theologie nach Auschwitz*, Freiburg im Breisgau 2016, 46f. Here, too, it is necessary to know how this uniqueness of Auschwitz is theologically justified. When the late Pope Benedict XVI visited Auschwitz on 28 May 2006, he made a historic statement about Auschwitz, saying that Auschwitz was a crime against God and man in parallel in history. This statement of Pope Benedict XVI can be seen as a commentary on the disputes of historians about the uniqueness and incomparability of Auschwitz. Here the Pope takes the side of those who emphasise the incomparability and uniqueness of Auschwitz. In this speech, the Pope also said that the perpetrators of the violence of Auschwitz wanted above all to kill the God who gave moral dictates to humanity on Mount Sinai through Moses; by killing Jews, they wanted to kill God who revealed Himself to them through Moses and who gave moral dictates to humanity through them. The existence of the Jews is a testimony to this God, who demands moral and ethical correctness from every human being. By killing them, God is killed, and the perpetrators of this violence will take God's place and become the rulers of the world. Here Pope Benedict XVI takes up the idea of George Steiner to conclude that the extermination of the Jews is an attack on God. Steiner says that the secret driving force of anti-Semitism is the abhorrence of God and his commandments; with this theological insight, anti-Semitism could be considered a form of anti-theism. In the biblical sense, therefore, whenever the chosen people, the Jews, are persecuted and discriminated against, the apple of God's eye is touched. (cf. Zech 2:12) Here again, the Pope did not deny that Christian antisemitism prepared the ground for Auschwitz. However, Holocaust was not performed by Christians or in the name of Jesus, but by anti-Christians, who saw it as the first phase of the destruction of Christianity. The Nazis believed that the Germans were Judaized by Catholic Christianity, and they also made slogans that after the Jews, the Jews-lovers would follow. So, Auschwitz is not being carried out by Christians, but by anti-Christians and, above all, by atheists seduced by the power of evil. Their primary aim was to kill Jews, which is an attack on God, who has given moral responsibility to human beings, and then they wanted to target Christians, who are also committed to this God and his moral teachings, given by Jesus in the Beatitudes. Cf. also Joseph RATZINGER, *Salt of the Earth Christianity, and the Catholic Church at the End of the Millennium. An Interview with Peter Seewald* [trans. by Adrian WALKER], San Francisco 1997, 184–186. Cf. also STEINER, George, *Errata. An examined Life*, Great Britain 1997, 64–69.

²⁰³ Cf. *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ Cf. METZ, *Remembering and Resisting. The new Political Theology*, 43.

²⁰⁵ Cf. METZ, *Auschwitz. II. Theologisch*, 1261.

²⁰⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ Cf. METZ, *Remembering and Resisting. The new Political Theology*, 43.

Here, however, Metz speaks of the cultural *amnesia* in society and especially in Christian theology. This cultural *amnesia* has made people forget the catastrophe of Auschwitz and all the histories of suffering and evil deeds. This cultural *amnesia* in theology has caused Christian theology to forget its roots in the Jewish faith tradition. Because of this cultural *amnesia*, Christian theology forgot its roots in the Jewish faith tradition, which was cultivated by *anamnestic* reason, and adopted the Hellenistic tradition.²⁰⁸ Here Metz speaks of the early Christian community which, like the Jewish faith community, was formed by *anamnestic* reason. The early Christian community was a community of remembrance and narration. This community remembered not the successful story but a dangerous story, *memoria passionis*, and this remembering of the dangerous story formed the faith life of the early Christian community.²⁰⁹ Metz brings the *memoria passionis* to the fore in order to remember and to act upon the dangerous memories of history. This dangerous memory is the source of action in early Christianity and the demand for a commitment to the victims of the suffering.

Now the difference between the fate of the victims of Auschwitz and the fate of the Christian-Untouchables are drawn in concrete way. As we have already seen, the word “caste” comes from a Portuguese root that means “pure” and “chaste”. It indicates that to maintain purity of race and clan, the caste system was created in Indian society. In the Hindu society of India, the untouchables were considered impure and unclean. The same caste consciousness was also a factor in the conversion of Hindus to Christianity. The conversion process itself brought the casteism into the Church. The upper caste converted Christians considered themselves pure and clean and they avoided any contact with the Christian-Untouchables. This caste mindset made the upper caste converted Christians to discriminate the Christian-Untouchables. The dangerous substitution theory of Christian theology gave way to the mass murder of Jews in Auschwitz. Similarly, the caste consciousness of upper caste Christians gave way to discrimination against Christian-Untouchables in the Catholic Church.

Like the European world and the European Church, the Church in India is suffering from a kind of cultural *amnesia*. The Church in India is not bothered or disturbed by the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables. It claims that it is witnessing to the Gospel

²⁰⁸ Cf. Ibid. 30–31.

²⁰⁹ Cf. METZ – MOLTSMANN, Faith and the Future. Essays on Theology, Solidarity and Modernity, 7–8.

in the context of religious pluralism by turning its back on the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables. In such a situation, the Indian Catholic Church should take the *memoria passionis* into its conscience instead of the caste consciousness. This *memoria passionis*, as a dangerous memory, will challenge the cultural *amnesia* of the Indian Church and provide a way to think about and act against the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables.

3.5.2 The Suffering of Christian-Untouchables as a Dangerous Memory

Having already seen the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables in detail in the second chapter, we will now try to understand their suffering as a dangerous memory, using Metz's *memoria passionis* as the dangerous memory of Christianity.

As we saw in the first part of this chapter, Metz speaks of two types of memory. The memory of the conquerors and the memory of the sufferers. The memories of the winners are the good old memories of the past, with no oppressive or dangerous element and with no future. The memories of the victims or of the losers are the memories that break through the centre point of life and reveal a dangerous insight into the future. They subvert the structure of our plausibility.²¹⁰ What Metz is trying to point out here is that the memories of the suffering of others are dangerous in the sense that they bring dangerous insights to those who remember them and are subversive to change the status quo of the society in which it happened. Furthermore, Metz says that the dangerous memory is future-oriented, in the sense that the future is the future of the victims and the oppressed. Also, this dangerous memory makes a demand on those who remember them in the present. It demands action from those whose memory is recalled by these dangerous memories. The objective of this action should be the reduction or the elimination of the suffering of the victims.

Metz argues that the *memoria passionis* was a dangerous memory because, as a dangerous memory, it also challenged the status quo of the victorious society. Moreover, the *memoria passionis* promised a future for all the victims of history. Metz says that the *memoria passionis*, in its theological meaning, is an anticipatory memory,

²¹⁰ Cf. METZ – MOLTSMANN, Faith and the Future. Essays on Theology, Solidarity and Modernity, 7–8.

anticipating the future of all the suffering, the oppressed, the despairing, the wounded and the unworthy of this earth.²¹¹

The *Memoria Passionis* draws everyone's attention to the fact that human history is a history of suffering, including the suffering of others, even of enemies and foreigners. In the same way, we see the history of the Catholic Church in India as the history of the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables. Based on what we have seen in the second chapter, we can conclude that the Christian-Untouchables are victims of caste discrimination in their daily lives. They are victims of physical and mental discrimination and their suffering is so miserable even today when we talk about human dignity and equality. This suffering of the Christian-Untouchables in the Church of India has not come to an end; on the contrary, it has been going on for the last five centuries and the Christian-Untouchables continue to suffer caste-based discrimination in innumerable ways.

The suffering of the Christian-Untouchables becomes a dangerous memory because it brings a dangerous insight into the inner conscience of the Indian Church. The suffering of the Christian-Untouchables as a dangerous memory awakens the Indian Church to respond to it. It is subversive in the sense that it calls into question the status quo of the Indian Church, which is for past five centuries indifferent to the suffering of the untouchables and which turns its face away from them and tries to bear witness to the Gospel.

This dangerous memory challenges the Church in India today and calls into question its subjectivity. In the midst of the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables, the Church in India loses its subjectivity before God because it does not recognize its connectedness to other human beings as a subject before God. The whole Church, as a subject before God, needs to examine how it reacts when Christian-Untouchables are discriminated against and suffer. The suffering of the Christian-Untouchables, as a dangerous memory, evokes the reaction of all the faithful of the Indian Church as a subject before God. This dangerous memory urges everyone in the Church to put an end to this caste discrimination which prevents everyone from being a subject before God. This mere remembering of this dangerous memory calls everyone to praxis.²¹²

²¹¹ Cf. Ibid., 15.

²¹² Cf. METZ, Faith in History & Society. Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology, 229–230.

This praxis is to carry out actions that are intrinsically human, that highlight the value of the human person and that connect us with others who are suffering.²¹³

3.5.3 *Anamnestic Reason's Claim to Justice for Christian-Untouchables*

Metz's new political theology is not primarily concerned with a fixed theoretical system, but with concrete narratives of human suffering.²¹⁴ We have seen this clearly in his view on the interruption of the catastrophe of Auschwitz. In this way, Metz understands history to be the history of human suffering. He places this human suffering at the center of his new political theology. Metz's new political theology is therefore a call for transformative praxis for the eradication of human suffering in the world. His theology does not focus on the production of systematic theories of human experience and of religious experience. He is convinced that theological reasoning should respond to the human suffering in history.²¹⁵

Here Metz is introducing the concept of an *anamnestic* reason that is imbued with the human suffering. Metz notes that *anamnestic* reason is fundamental to Jewish tradition and Christian faith. Memory of Exodus is a constructive element of Jewish tradition, just as *memoria passionis* is the fundamental element of Christian faith.²¹⁶ This *anamnestic reason*, that is, the memory of human suffering, constitutes the Christian faith and is the dowry of the Jewish tradition.²¹⁷ By forgetting this *anamnestic* reason of the Jewish tradition, the early Christian Church became more metaphysical and insensitive to human suffering and justice.²¹⁸ Metz, therefore, places *anamnestic* reason at the center of his new political theology, which is a memory of human suffering in history and demands for justice. This *anamnestic* reason, according to Metz, is an *a priori* of human suffering.²¹⁹ This *anamnestic* reason is not morally indifferent; on the contrary, the memory of the suffering of others is inherent in it and

²¹³ Cf. DOWNEY, (ed.), *Love's Strategy: The Political Theology of Johann Baptist Metz*, 6–7.

²¹⁴ Johann Baptist METZ, *Facing the World. A Theological and Biographical Inquiry* [trans. by John K. DOWNEY], in: *Theological Studies*, 75/1 (2014), 23 – 33, here: 24.

²¹⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ Matthew T. EGGEMEIER, *A Post-Secular Modernity? Jurgen Habermas, Joseph Ratzinger, and Johann Baptist Metz on Religion, Reason, and Politics*, in: *The Heythrop Journal*, LIII (2012), 453–466, here: 458.

²¹⁷ Ekkehard SCHUSTER–Reinhold BOSCHERT–KIMMING, *Hope against Hope. Johann Baptist Metz and Eile Wiesel Speak out on the Holocaust* [trans. by Matthew ASHLEY], New York 1999, 15.

²¹⁸ Cf. MARSDEN, *The Political Theology of Johannes Baptist Metz*, 447.

²¹⁹ Cf. METZ, *A Passion for God. The Mystical–Political Dimension of Christianity*, 143.

is the guarantee of its human character.²²⁰ Since *anamnestic* reason is the *a priori* of human suffering and the guarantee of human character, it is not simply a feeling or an empathy, but a huge demand for justice and the human good.²²¹ When Metz takes up the epistemological challenge of the Enlightenment, he speaks of the universal interest that can be the cause of true knowledge. The universal interest, according to the biblical tradition which is constituted by *anamnestic* reason, is hunger and thirst for justice. Indeed, this justice is for those who live and dead and for all the human sufferings of present and past.²²² In other words, Metz says that the hunger and thirst for justice for those who suffer unjustly and innocently is at the root of Christian theology.²²³

So, in this background of *anamnestic* reason, when we confront the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables, which becomes the dangerous memory, it demands from every Christian of the Indian Church to fight for the justice of the Christian-Untouchables. The biblical God in whom we have faith will be universal and will be meaningful for all human beings only when our sensitivity and responsibility towards the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables is awakened.²²⁴

When Metz speaks of the interruption of the socially and culturally polycentric world, he sees the world of the world churches. In this world of the world church there is a history of suffering such as racism, exploitation of the poor, violence against women and so forth. In the Indian Church, this history of suffering is primarily in the form of discrimination against the Christian untouchable. Such conditions of suffering in this part of the world church are in direct contradiction with the values of the Gospel. Thus, the discrimination of the Christian-Untouchables in the Indian Church contradicts the values of the Gospel. As a dangerous memory, it demands an act of justice by the *anamnestic* reason.²²⁵ The Christian-Untouchables, who became Christians hoping to gain human dignity and respect, are not treated as equals. They have been humiliated and oppressed in the Church. Their suffering is a dangerous memory. It demands that justice be done for them in the Church.

²²⁰ Cf. METZ, *Remembering and Resisting. The new Political Theology*, 11.

²²¹ Joseph RATZINGER, et al. (eds.), *The End of Time? The Provocation of Talking about God* [trans. by Matthew ASHLEY], New York 2004, 42.

²²² Cf. METZ – MOLTSMANN, *Faith and the Future. Essays on Theology, Solidarity and Modernity*, 51.

²²³ Cf. METZ, *Facing the World. A Theological and Biographical Inquiry*, 27.

²²⁴ Cf. METZ, *Remembering and Resisting. The new Political Theology*, 6.

²²⁵ Cf. METZ, *Facing the World. A Theological and Biographical Inquiry*, 29.

3.5.4 Solidarity with the Christian-Untouchables as Praxis of Christian faith

The third essential element of Metz's new political theology is solidarity. In the new political theology solidarity with the victims of history is the most important thing. In Metz's view, history is the history of suffering, and here he introduces his idea of solidarity in order to eliminate human suffering from society. According to Metz, solidarity is that which is fundamentally established with the needy, the suffering and those who have been forgotten and left behind in the march of progress. In the midst of suffering, it is only by means of solidarity that Christian praxis can be achieved.²²⁶

For Metz, solidarity is essentially an affirmative support of the subject in all historical circumstances, especially under the threat of suffering and destruction. Understood in this way, solidarity is the category that saves the subject from all that threatens it: forgetfulness, oppression, death.²²⁷ Metz says that when the human object loses its subjectivity in the face of suffering, and the solidarity reconstitutes it. Human beings, as subjects before God, are connected to one another. Solidarity with the suffering subjects restores their subjectivity.

Metz considers solidarity as the praxis of Christian faith following Jesus' footsteps. Christianity, which is found in the *memoria passionis* of Jesus and which follows in the footsteps of Jesus, should be like Jesus in its treatment of the suffering of others. As a community of memory and narrative, Christianity is committed to following Jesus, whose first gaze embraced the suffering of others. Jesus first looked not at others' sin but at their suffering. For him, sin is nothing but the refusal to be in solidarity with those who are in suffering.²²⁸

According to Metz, the God of the Bible is the God of justice, who shatters the norms of a society which is insensitive to human suffering and saves those who are unjustly oppressed. He calls every human being to become a subject by helping others to become a subject in the face of suffering and oppression.²²⁹ Metz insists that following in the footsteps of Jesus and believing in the biblical God of justice demands solidarity with the victims and oppressed of history.

²²⁶ Cf. METZ, Faith in History & Society. Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology, 230–231.

²²⁷ Cf. MARTINEZ, Confronting the Mystery of God. Political, Liberation, and Public Theologies, 67.

²²⁸ Cf. METZ, Remembering and Resisting. The new Political Theology, 38.

²²⁹ Cf. METZ, Faith in History & Society. Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology, 72.

When the Christian-Untouchables are suffering unjustly because of caste discrimination, it is the duty of every Indian Christian to be in solidarity with them. The caste discrimination destroys their identity and they lose their subjectivity before God; solidarity with them will help them to become subject. As a disciple of Jesus and as a believer in the biblical God of justice, every Christian must first gaze into the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables and not into the stigma of their caste. If they do not embrace the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables, they are committing a sin, and this is contrary to the values of the Gospel. The need of the hour, therefore, is solidarity with the Christian-Untouchables. This Solidarity needs to be shown by what is done. Therefore, solidarity calls the individual to be mature and responsible, to be doers, actors, agents, and not just objects floating on the waters of history.²³⁰ This solidarity is not only to remember the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables, but also to bring about the changes needed to end it.²³¹ Thus solidarity calls for action against caste discrimination, for the elimination of the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables.

3.6 Conclusion

Metz's New Political Theology does not tolerate or accept human suffering. Likewise, it does not accept the suffering of Christian-Untouchables in the Indian Catholic Church. It puts the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables in the foreground and questions their right to exist. It considers the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables as a dangerous memory with an eschatological hope. This dangerous memory of the Christian-Untouchables calls upon all the Christians of the Indian Church to be in solidarity with them. Metz insists that the dangerous memory does not simply look back, but looks forward and future oriented.

The Dangerous Memory of Jesus has broken the assumptions of the world. It has brought new hope and a better future for the victims of history. Therefore, the Indian Catholic Church, which is the bearer and witness of the Dangerous Memory of Jesus, should open its eyes to the sufferings of the Christian-Untouchables. As a community, the Indian Catholic Church should commit itself to the eradication of the sufferings of the Christian-Untouchables in the context of eschatological hope. Thus, Metz's idea

²³⁰ Cf. METZ, *Remembering and Resisting. The new Political Theology*, xiii.

²³¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, xii.

concerning the mystical and political element of discipleship and the relevance of the eschatological hope will be explored in the next chapter. Using these ideas of Metz's political theology, let us consider how the Catholic Church in India should commit itself to realizing the eschatological hope that is promised to all, and especially to the Christian-Untouchables.

CHAPTER 4

ESCHATOLOGICAL HOPE FOR THE CHRISTIAN- UNTOUCHABLES AND FOR THE INDIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AS WHOLE

4.1 Introduction

The caste discrimination and the sufferings of the Christian-Untouchables are an indicator of a kind of cultural *amnesia* in the Indian Catholic Church. That is, the Indian Catholic Church is in the clutches of a cultural *amnesia* in which it forgets its true nature and its purpose, what it exists for. In this age of cultural *amnesia*, there is a need for *memoria passionis* as a provocative remembrance.²³² *Memoria passionis*, as a dangerous memory and a provocative remembrance, promised a future for suffering humanity. This promise is biblical and eschatological in nature and includes freedom, peace, justice, and reconciliation. The Christian community of the New Testament was aware of all these promises and lived in such a way to establish all these promises in the social and political circumstances in which it lived.²³³ Jesus' *memoria passionis* gave them strength, despite all their struggles and hardships, not to be affected by social and political circumstances, but to live out the eschatological promises. Similarly, the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables, as a dangerous memory, prompts every Indian Catholic to live as a New Testament Christian in the midst of caste culture and to challenge it for the promotion of the eschatological promises of freedom, peace, justice and reconciliation. The New Political Theology of Metz seeks to highlight the gap between the eschatological message of Jesus and the reality of political society. The salvation promised by Jesus continues to affect the world, not in a cosmological sense, but in a social and political sense.²³⁴ Metz's new political theology is therefore an attempt to translate the eschatological message into contemporary socio-political conditions.²³⁵ In this chapter, the eschatological promise

²³² Cf. METZ, *Remembering and Resisting. The new Political Theology*, 65.

²³³ Cf. DOWNEY, (ed.), *Love's Strategy: The Political Theology of Johann Baptist Metz*, 31.

²³⁴ Cf. DOWNEY, (ed.), *Love's Strategy: The Political Theology of Johann Baptist Metz*, 30–31.

²³⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 26.

of Jesus is discussed in detail in the social and political context of the Indian Catholic church, which is dominated by caste and its discrimination.

4.2 Indian Catholic church Messianic or Bourgeois

Metz criticizes the fact that in our modern times, Christianity, instead of being the messianic religion of the Bible, has become the religion of bourgeois society.²³⁶ Here Metz emphasizes that messianic Christianity must distinguish itself from bourgeois religion. If this is not done, Christianity will lose its identity as a messianic religion. Messianic Christianity will lose its identity as a Messianic religion if this bourgeois religion continues to exist.²³⁷ In today's socio-political context, the messianic virtues of repentance, compassion and unconditional love for the least of our brothers and sisters are overshadowed by the traits of this bourgeois society, such as autonomy, stability, competition and success.²³⁸ The messianic future that is proper to our Christian faith does not support or reinforce the preconceived bourgeois future and its virtues. Rather, it disrupts it. This disruption, which comes from above to strike at the complacency of our bourgeois society, has a more familiar biblical name: repentance, the turning of the heart, metanoia.²³⁹ In discussing the relationship between Messianic Christianity and the bourgeois religion of modern society, Metz presents three images of the Church that exist today.

4.2.1 Three Images of the Church

Metz identifies three images of the Church in relation to bourgeois society. These three images of the Church are in a state of conflict with each other. The three images are: a pre-bourgeois paternalistic church, a bourgeois supply - or service - church, and a postbourgeois initiative-taking church. Metz believes that these three images of the church correspond to the three types of theology that dominate in the church.²⁴⁰

²³⁶ Johann Baptist METZ, *The Emergent church, The Future of Christianity in a Postbourgeois World*, trans. by Peter MANN, New York 1986, 1.

²³⁷ Cf. METZ – MOLTSMANN, *Faith and the Future. Essays on Theology, Solidarity and Modernity*, 18.

²³⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, xiv.

²³⁹ Cf. METZ, *The Emergent church, The Future of Christianity in a Postbourgeois World*, 2.

²⁴⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 86.

4.2.1.1 Pre-bourgeois paternalistic church

Neo-scholastic theology, with its strong apologetic focus, is the source of the pre-bourgeois paternalistic church. This classical theology is concerned with the people and acts on behalf of them. That is why the Church, which is the result of this theological tradition, is paternalistic and has above all a legal and apologetic function in the bourgeois society.²⁴¹ This image of the Church manifests itself in the defensiveness of the clergy towards the danger posed by bourgeois society.²⁴² In this Church, the clergy responds legally to bourgeois society, and this does not offer any real help to the basic parish communities or to the Church as a whole.²⁴³ This image of the Church is mainly apologetic in nature and it never thinks of its messianic nature and of itself.

4.2.1.2 Bourgeois supply - or service - church

The second image of the church, the bourgeois supply or service church, is created by bourgeois liberal theology. It is this theology that is at the root of the process of the transformation of Christianity into a bourgeois religion. Therefore, this second image of the church is to some extent a reflection of the larger bourgeois society.²⁴⁴ Metz criticizes the fact that this kind of bourgeois church is characterized by individualism and is alien to his theology of the subject. The subject of this bourgeois religion is based on its own self-interest and interested in its own future.²⁴⁵ Metz deplores the weakening and distortion of the messianic character of the true Church in such churches. This kind of church preaches hope without expectation and joy, love without solidarity and spirituality without discipleship.²⁴⁶ The reason for this, according to Metz, is that religion does not have a claim on bourgeois society; on the contrary, bourgeois society has a claim on religion. It is not religion that transforms bourgeois society; it is bourgeois society that transforms religion according to its dictates.²⁴⁷

²⁴¹ Cf. Ibid.

²⁴² Cf. ADIPRASETYA, Johann Baptist Metz's *Memoria Passionis* and the Possibility of Political Forgiveness, 236.

²⁴³ Cf. METZ – MOLTSMANN, Faith and the Future. Essays on Theology, Solidarity and Modernity, 21.

²⁴⁴ Cf. METZ, The Emergent church, The Future of Christianity in a Postbourgeois World, 86.

²⁴⁵ Cf. Ibid., 5.

²⁴⁶ Cf. METZ – MOLTSMANN, Faith and the Future. Essays on Theology, Solidarity and Modernity, 19–20.

²⁴⁷ Cf. METZ, The Emergent church, The Future of Christianity in a Postbourgeois World, 83.

4.2.1.3 Postbourgeois initiative-taking church

After criticizing the two images of the church mentioned above, Metz proposes a third image of the church, which he calls the post-bourgeois initiative church. This image of the Church is the product of the post-idealist theology, such as the political theology and the theology of liberation. This theology gives rise to the third image of the church, the post-bourgeois initiative church, by criticising both the church and society. This church is called the basic community church or the people's church.²⁴⁸ Metz finds this image of the church in the Christian base communities of Latin America. This church, according to Metz, allows its members to discover themselves as subjects, as it aims to be a community of memory. It is a Church full of promise and full of hope for all its members.²⁴⁹ These basic community churches insist on prophetic ministries and offer the way to be in solidarity with the victims in society.²⁵⁰ Among these three images, the church today should be a postbourgeois initiative taking-church to regain its messianic nature in the post-modern age.

4.2.2 The Second Reformation

Metz argues that in today's socio-political conditions, the church's self-conception as a messianic church requires constant reformation of its members and its structure.²⁵¹ While drawing a distinction between messianic and bourgeois religion, Metz stresses the "Second Reformation" which is necessary for the Church to exist as a messianic religion in bourgeois society.²⁵² This second Reformation, of which Metz speaks, is an ecumenical one. He says that in order for this second reformation to take place, Catholic and Protestant Christianity must come together. If Metz sees the Reformation as a return to the original, he says that in the Protestant view the Reformation is the return of grace to the senses. In the Catholic view the Reformation is the return of grace to freedom.²⁵³ In the Protestant context, this Second Reformation is a protest against the invisible grace. For there is no possibility of a mysticism of grace without

²⁴⁸ Cf. Ibid., 86.

²⁴⁹ Cf. ADIPRASETYA, Johann Baptist Metz's *Memoria Passionis* and the Possibility of Political Forgiveness, 237.

²⁵⁰ Cf. METZ, The Emergent church, The Future of Christianity in a Postbourgeois World, 92.

²⁵¹ Peter J. ALBANO, The Contributions of Johannes B. Metz to a Political Theology, in: Thought, 62/244 (March 1987), 13 –25, here: 19.

²⁵² Cf. METZ – MOLTMANN, Faith and the Future. Essays on Theology, Solidarity and Modernity, xii.

²⁵³ Cf. METZ, The Emergent church, The Future of Christianity in a Postbourgeois World, 50.

a sensual struggle. Christianity can become a more authentic religion than bourgeois religion by invoking grace in sensual-social life.²⁵⁴ From the Catholic point of view, the Second Reformation is seen as an invocation of grace in freedom. It is the freedom of the individual, since before God no one is submissive or in bondage. This freedom, as a liberation, allows a person to become the subject of his or her own history in the face of God. This freedom is not a liberation in isolation, but a liberation in solidarity with one another. It is in this liberation of solidarity that the individual becomes a subject, together with others, in the presence of God. It is this freedom in solidarity that invites each one to stand with the poor and the oppressed in society. In this way, the Second Reformation in the Catholic sense calls for a repentance on the part of the Church authorities and institutions.²⁵⁵

Metz says that the Second Reformation has already begun in the Churches of the world. Especially in the churches of Latin America, where the basic Christian community is putting the values of the Gospel into practice in society for the peace and justice of all the oppressed and the poor. According to Metz, the Reformation should neither come from Wittenburg nor from Rome, but from the poor Churches of the world.²⁵⁶ This Second Reformation should come from below, as a reformation from the grass-roots. It does not need an induced reformer to carry out this Second Reformation, it is like the Christian base communities in Latin America should carry out their own reformation.²⁵⁷ This second ecumenical reformation of the Church will regain its messianic character.

4.2.3 The Change of Heart

The need for the Second Reformation is the impetus for a change of heart in the church. The church should not simply be a listener to the Word of God but a doer of the Word of God. Metz says that orthodoxy should be turned into orthopraxis.²⁵⁸ Here Metz points out that the transformation of society is not the concern of the gospel and not the business of the church. What is needed is a change of heart, and this is the first step towards the messianic future. This change of heart is more radical and more

²⁵⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, 56.

²⁵⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 57–60.

²⁵⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, 59.

²⁵⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 62–63.

²⁵⁸ Cf. ALBANO, *The Contributions of Johannes B. Metz to a Political Theology*, 19.

demanding. It is a purely inner process. We also see in the Gospel testimonies that a change took place in an individual and it affected his life, his needs, and his self-interest, damaging and disturbing him to change the way he lived. This change of heart converted the individual from the way he had been living.²⁵⁹ In Metz's view, this change of heart is a central idea of the Bible. It is a radical conversion of one's life before God. This change of heart in an individual person takes place in the history and society in which he lives. That is why Metz says that changing one's heart means breaking away from bourgeois society. This means that the change of heart leads an individual from the excess of power to the powerlessness, from the wealth to the poverty, from the total consumerism to the scarcity, from the apathy to the compassion.²⁶⁰ This change of heart is necessary and it will contribute to the transformation of society. The conversion referred to in the above-mentioned sense cannot be carried out by an individual on his own; it should be carried out together with others. In this context, Metz is of the opinion that the church should take the initiative in the promotion of this kind of conversion among its members.²⁶¹ The conversion of individuals will open the way for the transformation of society.

4.2.4 Messianic character: the need of the hour for the Indian Catholic Church

After understanding Metz's view on the messianic character and the three images of the Church, the question arises in our minds whether Christianity in India is messianic or bourgeois? If we look at the Indian Catholic Church, where casteism and caste discrimination are still thriving today, we can say that it is not definitely messianic. The Indian Catholic Church did not influence the Indian caste society, rather the other way round, the Indian caste society influenced the Indian Christianity and made the Indian Church a caste church in harmony with its caste system. Being influenced by Indian caste society, the Indian Catholic Church does not have its messianic character of repentance, compassion, and unconditional love for the least of its brethren. Instead, it has the character of the Indian caste society, such as competition, achievement, and rivalry, which especially discriminates against the lower caste untouchables. Thus, the

²⁵⁹ Cf. METZ – MOLTSMANN, *Faith and the Future. Essays on Theology, Solidarity and Modernity*, 18. Cf. also METZ, *The Emergent church, The Future of Christianity in a Postbourgeois World*, 2–3.

²⁶⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 72.

²⁶¹ Cf. *Ibid.*

Church in India has lost its messianic character and has been completely influenced by the Indian caste society.

In this situation, the Catholic Church in India must not be a paternalistic church, nor must it be a bourgeois supply church. Rather, it should be an initiative-taking Church. As an initiative-taking church, it should realize that it is messianic in nature. It should try to eliminate all caste-influenced characters in it and exercise the messianic characters. The Indian church, as a church of the basic community, should consider all its members as subjects before God and should be in solidarity with them, and above all with the Christian-Untouchables. It should be a source of hope for all its members and especially for the Christian-Untouchables. In this regard, a Second Reformation is needed in the Indian Church to review its messianic character and to fight against casteism and discrimination. Above all, the conversion of hearts of the members of the Indian Church is very much expected to create a Church without casteism and discrimination. This conversion should be a collective one.

4.3 Eschatological Hope for the Christian-Untouchables

The Church's messianic character includes eschatological hope. The messianic character, together with the repentance, the compassion, and the unconditional love for the least of our brethren, also affirms the eschatological hope for them. For Metz, theology is eschatology, and eschatology is not one of the disciplines of theology, but rather the fundamental discipline that determines and formulates all theological statements and ideas, especially those that have to do with the world. Metz believes that the world appears as history only within the eschatological horizon of hope.²⁶² Metz understood theology of the world as history and history as eschatology. This understanding of Metz's history as eschatology has a Christian significance with a twofold focus on a past event of resurrection and a future hope of *Parousia*.²⁶³ With these conceptions, Metz introduces into his new political theology the eschatological hope for the suffering victims of history.

²⁶² Cf. DOWNEY, (ed.), *Love's Strategy: The Political Theology of Johann Baptist Metz*, 19–20.

²⁶³ Cf. OSTOVICH, *The Future of Political Theology*, 318.

4.3.1 Promised future for the world in the context of the biblical renunciation of the world

According to Metz, Christian eschatological hope is the future that has been promised to us by God. For Metz, this Christian hope, which is oriented towards the promised future, should not neglect the world and its future. In this perspective, the Christian faith is not only a hope for itself, but also a hope for the world. When Metz speaks of the Christian hope that goes along with this world and its future, he raises the ambivalent biblical concept of renunciation of the world. For him, renouncing the world does not mean escaping from the world, but going forward with the world. This is the dynamic which underpins Christian hope. Metz points out here that the biblical concept of renouncing the world means fleeing from the self-made world of the dominant and ruling communities. So, renunciation of the world does not mean a unilateral denial of the world or a total refusal to be involved with the world. It signifies a willingness to face a painful alienation from the present world condition, and to renounce the haughtiness and vanity of the world. Every Christian must flee from the world of pride and boasting, not because he despises it, but because he hopes for the future that God has promised. This hope renders them accountable for the world and its future. This Christian renunciation of the world is based on the spirit of hope of the Bible, which is the hope of all human beings. It is to be found in the imitation of Christ at the hour of his crucifixion. This hour is a unique one in which the world becomes vindicated and defeated. Thus, the Christian renunciation of the world is a crucified hope for the world as a form of service. The faith that is guided by this hope is therefore not a doctrine. It is an initiative for the passionate renewal and reshaping of the world for the Kingdom of God.²⁶⁴

4.3.2 The Church at the service of the Kingdom of God

When Metz claims that the Church is committed to the world and its future, he is referring to the relationship between the Church and the world. According to him, this relationship between the Church and the world is not spatial but temporal. For him, the church is an eschatological and exodus community, and its whole institutional and sacramental life is rooted in this eschatological character. Metz affirms that the church,

²⁶⁴ Cf. DOWNEY, (ed.), *Love's Strategy: The Political Theology of Johann Baptist Metz*, 20–22.

which is eschatological in nature, does not aspire to itself but to the kingdom of God. The church, by its provisional and historically progressive character, is committed to the coming kingdom of God. And the church has a hope that the kingdom of God will come as the promised future of the world.²⁶⁵ The Church, then, seeks to bring the whole world, with all its people, into the Kingdom of God, where there will be peace, justice, and freedom.

4.3.3 The Creative and Militant Eschatology

Metz makes it clear that the church, which is at the service of the kingdom of God, cannot work for the realization of this kingdom as the promised future of the world by means of pure contemplation. Contemplation, by definition, refers to something that already exists. For Metz, the future that the Church hopes for is not yet here, but it is in the making and in the process of coming into being. In this regard, Metz articulates that the eschatological hope of the Church should be creative and militant. In other words, the Church's hope should be realized in an eschatology that is creative and militant. Metz points out that our eschatological hope does not wait for a heavenly Jerusalem that already exists. Nor is it before us in some distant, invisible place that just needs to be revealed to us. Metz assures us that our hopeful approach builds this promised future, the heavenly Jerusalem, and that we are the creators of this future, not simply its interpreters. Thus, Metz suggests that the power of God's future promise drives us from this world to the eschatological city. Metz concedes that our Christian eschatology is not merely a presential eschatology, nor a passive waiting for the coming of God's kingdom, where the world and its time seem like a waiting room. On the contrary, Christian eschatology is a creative and militant eschatology that is gradually being realized. For Metz, an eschatological faith and a commitment to the world are not mutually exclusive.²⁶⁶ He says that eschatological faith is a concrete practice in society and history, driven by the eschatological proviso. This provisional character of eschatology leads one to criticize every political system in the light of the Kingdom of God, to be in solidarity with the suffering people.²⁶⁷

The new political theology of Metz, guided by this creative-militant eschatology, hopes for universal peace and justice. For Metz, Christian hope, creative and militant,

²⁶⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 22.

²⁶⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, 22–23.

²⁶⁷ Cf. OSTOVICH, *The Future of Political Theology*, 318.

is directed towards the other. This hope is itself fulfilled in love for the other, for the least of our brethren. It is only in the kenosis of love for the least of our brethren that Christian hope enters the passion of death. This is the imitation of Christ. Jesus did not live for himself, but for us. This means that Christian hope is to live for the sake of others.²⁶⁸ Therefore, according to the new political theology of Metz, the eschatological hope aims, in today's historical and social context, to bring the promised future to the suffering victims and innocents.

4.3.4 Eschatological Hope for the Suffering Christian-Untouchables

When Metz speaks of the renunciation of the world in the context of God's promised future, it is not just a renunciation of the world, but an emphasis on the way forward with the world. He only urges the renunciation of the world of pride and boasting, which was the self-made world of the dominant community. He insists on renouncing this world and moving forward with the suffering victims of history towards the promised future. In this perspective, the Indian Catholic Church should renounce the world of pride and arrogance created by the caste mindset and join hands with the suffering Christian-Untouchables of history and society. In renouncing this world of caste pride, the Catholic Church in India should follow the example of Christ on the cross. The Catholic Church in India, in the footsteps of the crucified Jesus, should take a passionate initiative to move together with the Christian-Untouchables towards the promised future which is the Kingdom of God.

In Metz's view, the eschatological hope is not the expectation of a future that has already been. For Metz, the future that eschatological hope wishes for is not yet here, it is in the process of becoming. This is the reason why he mentions that the eschatology is a militant and creative one. In this context, each individual Christian has the duty to establish this eschatological hope in the socio-political context. This eschatological hope, with its militant and creative character, challenges all political systems that are opposed to peace and human justice. This eschatological hope is always directed towards others. This hope loves the suffering innocents of history and works with them against all injustice and discrimination. So, the Catholic Church in India, with this militant and creative eschatology, should not ignore caste discrimination within the Church and hope for a promised future. On the contrary, the

²⁶⁸ Cf. DOWNEY, (ed.), *Love's Strategy: The Political Theology of Johann Baptist Metz*, 24–25.

Indian Church must take seriously the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables and seek to bring justice and peace to these victims of caste discrimination. If the Indian church is committed to this, it will be militant and creative, and on the right path to realizing the eschatological hope of the promised future. The Indian church will truly become an authentic agent of eschatological hope when it works together with Christian-Untouchables to eradicate caste discrimination and establish peace and justice.

4.4 The urgent need for true discipleship of Christ in the Indian Church

Christian eschatological hope is above all a life lived for others, especially for the least of our brethren. The kenosis of Jesus on the cross is the prototype of this life lived for others. Therefore, the imitation of Christ is required for the eschatological hope of living for others. To imitate Christ is to follow Christ in his kenosis of loving the least of our brethren. In the time of crisis, the Church must have the fundamental imperative, which calls the Church to follow Christ decisively. The Church in India, amid this caste crisis, should be a Church that follows Christ. In this circumstance, there is a great need for the Indian Catholic Church to be the true follower of Christ.²⁶⁹ To follow Jesus means not only to admire him and to imitate him, but to put him on and to become more radical and dangerous. In the words of Kierkegaard, Metz says that Christ gives his clothes to every Christian to re-present him.²⁷⁰ It is the duty of every Christian to follow Christ and to represent him today. The Indian Catholic Church is called specifically to re-present Jesus in the midst of the problem of casteism and its discrimination. In the following of Christ, one becomes more radical. The present situation of the Indian Catholic Church is in a state of shock. It needs to be moved in the direction of following Jesus radically. Let us now look at what it means to follow Christ radically, and how Metz interprets the true discipleship of Christ and its commitment in a society where there is no justice and peace and where innocent people suffer.

²⁶⁹ Johann Baptist METZ, *Followers of Christ. The Religious Life and the Church* [trans. by Thomas LINTON], New York 1978, 54.

²⁷⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 34–36.

4.4.1 Christological Dimension of following Christ

Metz is of the opinion that the following of Christ is not merely pastoral, it is dogmatic. In this sense, he says that discipleship and Christology are interrelated and always come together.²⁷¹ According to Metz, Christology is a Christology of discipleship. The knowledge acquired in discipleship constitutes this Christology and becomes the theme and content of this Christology of discipleship.²⁷² The discipleship of Christ is not simply the implementation of the Christological teachings of the Church in our lives, but the following of Christ himself, and that in itself is the Christology.²⁷³ Thus, Metz says that Christianity and discipleship are interrelated and remain internally together. In this Christology of discipleship, the relationship between theory and practice cannot be understood as a purely conceptual dialectic. It must be understood as an action-oriented historical dialectic. There is no true knowledge of Christ without discipleship. Discipleship is enough to know Jesus. This is where Metz points out the danger of theological hermeneutics, which prematurely avoids the historical contexts and, in the end, does not understand a historical Christ, but only an idea of Christ.²⁷⁴

It is not the idea or the concepts that constitute Christology, but a dangerous memory that constitutes Christology. This story is hardly interesting, but it claims the madness of the cross. It is this dangerous story that leads us to discipleship and that reveals its saving power in discipleship. The attempt to know Christ will always lead to following him. Discipleship is therefore not simply a retrospective application of the Church's Christology to our lives; conversely, the practice of discipleship is itself a central part of Christology. Christ cannot be thought. Christology is not simply a lecture on discipleship, nor is it a subjective, systemic knowledge. Rather, Christology is nourished by the experience of discipleship. Christological knowledge is primarily transmitted in stories of discipleship. It also has an undeniable narrative-practical character.²⁷⁵ Therefore, in the new political theology of Metz, Christology is nothing

²⁷¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 39.

²⁷² Johann Baptist METZ, *Ein Bekenntnis zum Glauben in dieser Zeit (Genese –Ausrichtung– Theologische Hintergrundprämissen Bd. I)*, ed. by Johann REIKERSTORFER, Freiburg im Breisgau et al. 2022, 136.

²⁷³ Cf. METZ, *Followers of Christ. The Religious Life and the Church*, 39.

²⁷⁴ Cf. METZ, *Ein Bekenntnis zum Glauben in dieser Zeit*, 136.

²⁷⁵ Cf. Johann Baptist METZ, *Ein Bekenntnis zum Glauben in dieser Zeit*, 136–137. Cf. METZ, *Followers of Christ. The Religious Life and the Church*, 39–40.

but the imitation of Christ as his disciples, and it is progressively developed through the narrative stories of the disciples.

4.4.2 Mystical and Political Dimension of Discipleship

In today's context, the discipleship of Jesus has been misdirected and obscured by false heterodox ideas, such as limiting it to individual moral behaviour. But in Metz's view, the following of Christ has a social and political aspect. In this sense, the discipleship of Christ is both a mystical and a political one. Following Christ should make us aware of the interconnectedness of social and political condition. Metz claims that if we consider discipleship in its two dimensions as mystical and political, then Christology is a political Christology.²⁷⁶

In this political Christology, following Jesus is mystical in a situational context and political in a practical context. This is because the mystical aspect of the following of Jesus never occurs in a vacuum or in isolation from the society or from a particular political situation. The following of Jesus has this mystical and political aspect because it is not the following of Christ by the individual with an ethical attitude, but it is the following of Jesus himself as the way to God.²⁷⁷ If one tries to follow Jesus, it automatically comprises the mystical and political character, because during his time Jesus was neither a fool nor a rebel, but he was considered a fool by Herod and a rebel by his countrymen and was handed over to be crucified. So, whoever wants to follow Jesus as a disciple, he must be caught up in this kind of confusion and must go through this mystical and political dimension in following him.²⁷⁸

The mystical aspect of the following of Jesus is not the same as the mysticism of the Eastern religions. This mysticism is not a closed-eye mysticism but an open-eye mysticism. It is a mysticism that requires its adherents to have their eyes open to the suffering of others, and it is a mysticism of compassion, of being willing to suffer for those who suffer. It is a face-seeking mysticism that always leads to encountering the face of the suffering.²⁷⁹ This mysticism pays attention to all the unknown and uncomfortable sufferings, makes them visible and takes responsibility for them for the

²⁷⁶ Cf. METZ, *Followers of Christ. The Religious Life and the Church*, 40–41.

²⁷⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 42–44.

²⁷⁸ Cf. METZ, *A Passion for God. The Mystical–Political Dimension of Christianity*, 44–45.

²⁷⁹ Cf. METZ, *Remembering and Resisting. The new Political Theology*, 14.

sake of God.²⁸⁰ Mysticism is therefore an important keyword in the discipleship of Jesus Christ.

Discipleship of Jesus, which has a mystical and a political dimension, has a double commitment. The message of Jesus is clearly political because it proclaims the value and dignity of the human person. Those who follow Christ with this mystical and political commitment are obliged to fight against every threat that undermines the dignity of the human person and to liberate him or her from this misery and oppression.²⁸¹ Like Jesus, the discipleship of Jesus summons each one to give himself up for others and to become a victim, to the bitter end. In this sense, the following of Christ calls each one to be in solidarity with the poor, the weak and the oppressed of the world.²⁸²

4.4.3 Radical Obedience in Following Christ

Jesus' discipleship demands radical obedience from his followers. It is this obedience that underlies the mystical part of his passion. This obedience of Jesus was very radical and it led him to death on the cross. The suffering he endured on the cross is a yardstick of the radical nature of his obedience. He cried on the cross as a man forsaken by God. But for his part, he was always faithful to God and never forsaken him. The God who was silent during Jesus' radical obedience on the cross is not the God who is indifferent to human suffering and humiliates the sufferer. Rather, he is the God who liberates the suffering and promises a new future. He comes with outstretched arms of mercy and compassion. In this radical obedience, one surrenders one's life to God the Father, who frees one from this suffering and leads to a promised future. Radical obedience to God forces us to be close to those for whom this obedience is a sign of oppression and domination.²⁸³ It is in this radical obedience to suffering that Jesus' closeness to the outcast, the humiliated, the sinners and the lost is rooted. This radical obedience calls all his followers to be close to the oppressed, the afflicted and the marginalized. Radical obedience and commitment to the oppressed are inseparable; they are constitutive of discipleship of Jesus. The messianic gaze of Jesus towards the oppressed and suffering reveals the compassion of God. This God is not the God who

²⁸⁰ Cf. METZ, *A Passion for God. The Mystical–Political Dimension of Christianity*, 163.

²⁸¹ Cf. METZ, *Followers of Christ. The Religious Life and the Church*, 54.

²⁸² Cf. *Ibid.*, 47–48.

²⁸³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 63–67.

humiliates the suffering human being, but the God who uplifts and liberates them. The radical obedience of Jesus leads to this God who will remove all ambiguity from this obedience. This obedience is not an apathetic turning away from the suffering of others, rather it is an awakening to the suffering of others.²⁸⁴

4.4.4 Following Jesus with the expectation of *Parousia*

Metz says that the discipleship and the expectation of the second coming are two sides of the same coin. They are inseparable. The call to follow Jesus and the cry “Come, Lord Jesus” are always inter-related and cannot be separated. The early Church, with the goal that has always been expressed in the cry of Marantha, has committed itself to the demands of the radical following of Jesus. Without the idea of the *Parousia*, i.e. without the expectation of the second coming, the following of Jesus cannot be lived. The discipleship of Christ is a life of hope, it is a life with an apocalyptic impulse.²⁸⁵ The discourse on the Last Judgement from the Gospel of Matthew 25 is apocalyptic in character. This discourse makes one aware of the Last Judgement, which would take place when Jesus returns. It is clear from this discourse that the Last Judgement is intimately linked to our active commitment to others, specifically to the least of our brothers and sisters. The expectation of the Second Coming of Jesus, with its eschatological hope, does not mean that one should sacrifice one’s social and political responsibility. On the contrary, it demands a responsibility which is imposed by the times and which is taken away from us by expecting the Second Coming in infinity.²⁸⁶

4.4.5 The Indian Catholic Church: a true disciple of Christ with radical obedience

Metz’s thoughts on discipleship and Christology, as seen above, show that they are most needed in today’s Indian Catholic Church, where casteism and discrimination are still active. Eschatological hope for the promised future demands genuine discipleship of Christ. Only a true disciple can be an agent in bringing about the promised future in history. Therefore, the Catholic Church in India urgently needs to become a true disciple of Christ. Discipleship is not merely the admiration of Jesus and the confession of him before other religious people. Rather, true discipleship, which is mystical and political, calls everyone to open his/her eyes to the suffering of the innocent. The

²⁸⁴ Cf. METZ, Ein Bekenntnis zum Glauben in dieser Zeit, 139–140.

²⁸⁵ Cf. DOWNEY, (ed.), Love’s Strategy: The Political Theology of Johann Baptist Metz, 150.

²⁸⁶ Cf. Ibid., 152–153.

Indian Catholic Church, as a true disciple of Jesus, should open its eyes to the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables. It cannot claim to be a true disciple of Christ if it closes its eyes to the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables. The Indian Church, surrounded by most of the ancient religions like Buddhism and Hinduism, fails to realize its mysticism of open-eye. On the contrary, it follows the mysticism of these religions and continues to close its eyes to the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables. The discipleship of Christ, which is mystical and political, calls the Indian Church today to open its eyes to the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables and to act on the problem of discrimination in its social and political context.

Mystical and political discipleship of Jesus demands radical obedience. A true disciple of Jesus should be a follower of his radical obedience. Jesus was very radical in his obedience to God the Father. He even accepted death on the cross. This radical obedience on the cross brought Jesus closer to the suffering victims of history. It is the same radical obedience that invites all his disciples to a self-giving commitment to the suffering innocents of history. For the Indian Church to be committed to the suffering Christian-Untouchables, the same radical obedience is indispensable. Such radical obedience will bring the Indian Catholic Church closer to the Christian-Untouchables for whom this obedience is a sign of oppression.

On Metz's view, the discipleship is always linked to the *Parousia* and they are inseparable. But this connection with the *Parousia* should not prevent the Church in India from exercising its political and social responsibilities. A disciple should always keep the *Parousia* in mind and work actively for justice and peace in the political and social environment. A disciple, while thinking of the *Parousia* as if it would take place in eternity, should not neglect his responsibility towards the suffering victims of history. The Catholic Church, acting as a true disciple of Christ in view of the *Parousia*, should not neglect its social and political responsibility every day. It should keep the *Parousia* in mind and act against caste discrimination and try to bring about justice and peace in the Church.

4.5 The Need for a Mystical and Political Compassion in the Indian Catholic Church

Having dealt with the eschatological hope of the Messianic future and the need for discipleship in order to build the promised future, Metz goes on to develop the

important concept of his new political theology. Metz uses biblical monotheism and the stories of Jesus in the New Testament to argue for universalism in the context of religious and cultural pluralism. Drawing on the biblical tradition, Metz introduces a particular kind of universal responsibility. This universal responsibility is not primarily aimed at the universality of sin, but at the universality of suffering in the world. Metz says that Jesus did not look first at the sins of others, but at the suffering of others. For Jesus, sin is the refusal to take part in the suffering of the other. So, Metz says that Christianity, as a community of memory and narrative, has looked first to the suffering of others while following Jesus.²⁸⁷ The discipleship of Jesus demands from the Christian community a universal responsibility in relation to the suffering of others.

4.5.1 Compassion as a universal responsibility towards suffering victims

This universal responsibility towards the suffering of others is what Metz calls compassion. He does not use the term compassion in a vaguely defined sense, but in a participative sense. This compassion is an obligation to notice the suffering of others, and it is an active commemoration of the suffering of others. On the basis of the biblical tradition, this compassion is a change of perspective. It shifts our gaze and forces us to see suffering through the eyes of the victims and the oppressed. Compassion happens when we allow ourselves to be moved by others' suffering. According to Metz, this is where the mysticism begins, a mysticism that is as demanding as it is disturbing. This mysticism of compassion is a renunciation of the ego, a renunciation of the self. Here the renunciation of the ego is not simply the disappearance or abandonment of the ego, but grows deeper into the mystical covenant between God and human beings. In this mysticism, the ego is not dissolved in a mystical way, but is asserted in a moral and political way. This mysticism is the mysticism of the open eye, which is grounded in the encounter with the suffering of the other.²⁸⁸ The opening of one's eyes to the suffering of others is only the first step, the culmination of which is the praxis of compassion.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁷ Johann Baptist METZ, *Memoria Passionis*. Ein provozierendes Gedächtnis in pluralistischer Gesellschaft, Freiburg im Breisgau et alii. 2006, 158–163. Cf. also DOWNEY, (ed.), *Love's Strategy: The Political Theology of Johann Baptist Metz*, 169.

²⁸⁸ Cf. METZ, *Memoria Passionis*. Ein provozierendes Gedächtnis in pluralistischer Gesellschaft, 166–167.

²⁸⁹ Matthew T. EGGEMEIER, A Mysticism of Open Eyes: Compassion for a Suffering World and the Askesis of Contemplative Prayer, in: *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality* 12/1 (Spring 2012), 43–62, here: 49.

4.5.2 Good Samaritan model for the praxis of compassion

Metz makes use of the parable of the Good Samaritan to explain the liberating praxis of compassion. First, the suffering of the victims makes an ethical demand on the one who looks at the suffering. Secondly, the encounter with the suffering victim demands self-denial or kenosis. This is the renunciation of one's own interests before the authority of the suffering person. Finally, mystical compassion with the suffering demands liberating political action, which involves taking down the crucified from their crosses and challenging the structures that cause the suffering of innocents.²⁹⁰ Metz says that there will be no higher and ultimate concern than the suffering of the victims.²⁹¹ In fact, for Metz, the authority of the sufferer is the fundamental element for the authority of the final judgement of God on humanity. It is the authority of those who suffer that gives God the authority to judge humankind. A universal responsibility is therefore demanded of everyone by this authority of the suffering people.²⁹² The Good Samaritan parable demonstrates that the scope of our responsibility is not limited to those we know, but is unlimited, encompassing all those who suffer.²⁹³ Therefore, more than anything else, the most important and primary concern of Christian compassion is to respond to the suffering of the victims.

4.5.3 Catholic Elephant Metaphor with Political Mysticism of Compassion

Metz insists that in the context of a pluralistic world, the Catholic Church, to avoid self-privatization, should be a church of compassion.²⁹⁴ Metz uses the metaphor of an elephant to speak of the Church's compassion. He suggests a Catholic elephant metaphor. Statistically, the Catholic Church, with one billion Catholics worldwide, is a large elephant. This Catholic elephant has been gifted with the memory of an elephant.²⁹⁵ Elephants do not forget and continue to remember. In the same way, the Church has the *memoria passionis* as a provocative memory in the pluralistic world threatened by cultural *amnesia*. This provocative memory calls for attention to the

²⁹⁰ Cf. EGGEMEIER, A Mysticism of Open Eyes: Compassion for A Suffering World and the Askesis of Contemplative Prayer, 49.

²⁹¹ Johann Baptist METZ, Toward a Christianity of Political Compassion, in: Love that Produces Hope: The thought of Ignacio Ellacuría, AQUINO, María at al. (eds.) Collegeville 2006, 250.

²⁹² Cf. METZ, Remembering and Resisting. The new Political Theology, 20.

²⁹³ Cf. Ibid., 38.

²⁹⁴ Cf. METZ, *Memoria Passionis*. Ein provozierendes Gedächtnis in pluralistischer Gesellschaft, 186.

²⁹⁵ Cf. METZ, Remembering and Resisting. The new Political Theology, 54.

authority of those who suffer, especially unjustly and innocently. In this sense, the Catholic memory of the elephant must recall the authority of the suffering innocent.²⁹⁶ At the same time, the elephant Catholic Church is thick skinned and stubborn in two ways. First, it is thick skinned when it is concerned with appealing to the spirit of the age. Secondly, it is thick skinned when it is dealing with those who sit on the elephant and have the authority to dictate its path.²⁹⁷ In order to respond to the spirit of the times in the pluralistic world, Metz is bringing in the sensitive soul of the elephant. In the world of cultural and religious pluralism, the sensitive soul of the Catholic elephant opens-up a new way to the Church. This new way of the Catholic elephant's sensitive soul is, according to Metz, political mysticism of compassion. This mystical compassion leads the elephant church to a commitment to the suffering of others.²⁹⁸

Metz stresses this mystical compassion of the Catholic elephant so much because the Church has found it very difficult to exercise this mystical compassion in the postmodern age. The question of justice for the innocent victims has been replaced by the question of the salvation of the sinful. Christian doctrine overdramatized the question of sin and minimized the suffering of the innocents. Christianity gradually became a religion of guilt, but first and foremost a religion sensitive to suffering. It has always been easier for the Church, especially in modern times, to deal with the guilty sinners than with the innocent victims.²⁹⁹ Therefore, in this circumstance, the Church should recognize its sensitive soul as an elephant and commit itself to the sufferings of the innocent victims in history and society.

4.5.4 Compassionate solidarity in prayer

Metz introduces the concept of prayer to make Christian compassion more concrete. In Metz's view, prayer has a historical solidarity. Throughout the history of humanity, the victims of suffering have always prayed in the midst of their grief, fear and suffering. Thus, their history is the history of prayer. By praying, those who pray become involved in a great historical solidarity. It is prayer that introduces us to the history of suffering humanity and gives us hope. A prayer is a "yes" to God in the face

²⁹⁶ Cf. METZ, *Memoria Passionis*. Ein provozierendes Gedächtnis in pluralistischer Gesellschaft, 189–190.

²⁹⁷ Cf. METZ, *Remembering and Resisting*. The new Political Theology, 55.

²⁹⁸ Cf. METZ, *Memoria Passionis*. Ein provozierendes Gedächtnis in pluralistischer Gesellschaft, 192.

²⁹⁹ Cf. METZ, *Remembering and Resisting*. The new Political Theology, 56.

of the suffering caused by violence and oppression, with the expectation that one day God will take all this suffering out of the world and justify it.³⁰⁰

But Metz introduces the spirit of Christ in prayer when he speaks of the purpose and function of prayer. To pray in the spirit of Christ is to have both a social and a political responsibility. Those praying in the spirit of Christ cannot turn their back on the suffering victims while praying. Followers of Christ should love their fellow human beings and pray with them, not for them. This means that prayer must be politically and socially responsible. Prayer should not just be the removal of apathy from our souls, or our indifference to the suffering victims, or our lack of compassion for them. On the contrary, prayer should create in us a mature attitude towards the exercising of social and political responsibility. When we pray to the suffering victims in the history, it creates in us painful feelings and this makes us to take responsibility. Whenever Jesus prayed, he always invoked “Our Father” who is in heaven. This God, our Father, is never indifferent to human suffering. He is the God who wipes away the tears and gathers in his mercy all those who have lost their way. Some may say that prayer is the opium of men. But when prayer leads to political and social action to eliminate the suffering of the innocent, it is a useful social tool.³⁰¹

4.5.5 Compassion for the Christian-Untouchables: a primary concern of the Indian Catholic Church

In the Indian Catholic Church, where casteism and its discrimination are present, the universal responsibility of mystical and political compassion is necessary. This compassion will only happen if one allows oneself to be moved by the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables. The mystical aspect of this compassion calls upon every member of the Church in India to open his or her eyes to the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables. In its political aspect, this compassion will urge them to act against the violence and discrimination that is being perpetrated on the Christian-Untouchables. This political aspect also demands the eradication of this discrimination from the Indian church. This compassion will make the converted upper caste Christians give up their ego. It will lead them deeper into the mystical covenant between God and the

³⁰⁰ Cf. DOWNEY, (ed.), *Love's Strategy: The Political Theology of Johann Baptist Metz*, 157–160.

³⁰¹ Johann Baptist METZ, *Mystik der offenen Augen. Wenn Spiritualität aufbricht*, hg. v. Johann REIKERSTORFER, Freiburg im Breisgau et ali. 2011, 107–108.

Christian-Untouchables. Compassion for suffering victims, as Metz mentions from the Good Samaritan model, requires self-denial on the part of the one who feels one with them. The Indian Church should undertake this self-denial to feel at one with the Christian-Untouchables. For the Indian Church, eliminating caste discrimination from the Church is the most urgent task. The compassion towards the Christian-Untouchables is the most significant concern of the Catholic Church in India today.

While discussing the political mysticism of compassion, Metz also incorporates the Catholic elephant metaphor. This metaphor of the Catholic elephant is more appropriate for the Catholic Church in India. Being a thick-skinned elephant, the Indian Church is not bothered about the suffering of Christian-Untouchables. The Church never gets disturbed by the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables. So, it should be aware of its sensitive soul to have a reaction to the caste discrimination in the Indian church. The Indian Church should also express its compassionate solidarity with the victims of caste discrimination in prayer. It should not just pray that there will be no discrimination in the name of caste in the church in India, but should take political and social responsibility to eliminate it. When the Church in India tries to pray in the spirit of Jesus, it calls on God as 'Our Father.' This God is the Father of all the suffering human beings and especially of the Christian-Untouchables. He does not remain indifferent to what they suffer, but rather wipes their tears and opens his Compassionate Heart to them. The Indian Church, which prays to this Father every day, should feel one with the Christian-Untouchables. It should take political and social responsibility for the abolition of caste discrimination in the Church.

4.6 Conclusion

As we have discussed in this chapter, the Indian church should realize that it is messianic in nature. It should not be subservient to the society in which it exists, but should transform it. How can it transform society? The transformation should come from within. As a collective, the Indian Church should strive for a change of heart. Since castes and their discrimination entered the church from the very beginning of conversion. The Indian Church should go to the root and realize its messianic nature. A collective change of heart in the Indian Church will help to eradicate caste discrimination in the Church. The eschatological hope of the new political theology of Metz calls the Indian church to be militant and creative. That is, it calls the church to

take active social and political responsibility to eradicate caste discrimination in the church. It should not hope for a promised future in the infinite, but rather create the promised future of God by bringing justice and peace within the church. Committed to this eschatological hope, the church should be a true disciple of Jesus. True discipleship of Christ demands from the Indian Church a radical obedience, which means giving up caste pride and mentality and giving up ego to reach out to the Christian-Untouchables.

Finally, universal responsibility, that is, mystical and political compassion, is very necessary in today's Indian Church for the elimination of caste discrimination. This mystical compassion of open eyes is urgently required to see the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables. By seeing their suffering, the Church should move to the next level of compassion and solidarity in prayer. Praying for the Christian-Untouchables includes the social responsibility to eradicate caste discrimination in the church.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

This work begins with the intention of addressing and eliminating the problem of casteism and its discrimination in the Indian Catholic Church. When we look at the Catholic Church in India, it seems to be active and vibrant in witnessing to the values of the Gospel in the pluralistic context of India. But when we go deeper and try to see how the Church lives, we find that it is fully influenced by casteism and caste discrimination. The church as a whole has made a lot of efforts at the national and regional levels for the elimination of casteism in the church. But up to this day we have the influence of caste in the life of the Church as an institutional level and as a structural level.

In this situation, in order to find a solution to this problem of casteism in the Indian Catholic Church, the new political theology of Metz, which takes the socio-political context as its *logos* of doing theology, comes to our help. The political theology of Metz is being developed as an alternative theology to the other two theological models, namely the neo-scholastic theology and the transcendental-idealist theology. These two theologies considered the challenges and problems of modernity and had the role of apologetics and defended the Christian faith. But the challenges of modernity were not really addressed by these theological models. This is where Metz comes in with his new political theology as a post-ideal theology. Metz's new political theology considers the challenges of the time and treats them as *logos* of theology. The suffering of the innocent in society and history is the main challenge of modernity. Metz's new political theology sees history as history of human suffering. In the history of suffering, the suffering of Jesus, i.e. the *memoria passionis*, is the centre which promises to the suffering innocents an eschatological hope and a promised future. The *memoria passionis*, which is the central theme of the political theology of Metz, calls everyone to remember the suffering of the innocent in history. In the Indian context, *memoria passionis* invites everyone to remember the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables. The suffering of Christian-Untouchables is seen as a dangerous memory that challenges the Indian Church's current status quo. Here the political theology of Metz proposes the act of solidarity as a practice of the Christian faith. Every individual is a subject before God, and he or she should feel as one with the suffering Christian-Untouchables. Here Metz speaks of the mysticism of the open-eye, that is, a mysticism that keeps the eye open to the encounter with the suffering of the innocent. This

mysticism is also political, i.e. it should be against all kinds of violence and discrimination for the elimination of human suffering in history. The suffering of the Christian-Untouchables also requires this open-eye mysticism on the part of the Indian Catholic Church as a whole and each individual Indian Christian. They should open their eyes to the suffering of the Christian-Untouchables and should be politically in solidarity with them for the elimination of the caste discrimination in the church.

Finally, eschatological hope for the suffering innocent is spoken of in the political theology of Metz. In the new political theology of Metz, eschatology is not contemplation in the hope of a promised future which is somewhere in existence. Rather, eschatology in the view of Metz is a creative and militant eschatology, which is the hope for universal peace and justice. This creative and militant eschatology invites the Catholic Church and individual Catholics in India to criticize and act against casteism in the Church. In other words, in view of the future promised to the Christian-Untouchables, the creative and militant eschatology of Metz calls the Catholic Church in India to question casteism and its discrimination. This creative and militant eschatological hope calls each Catholic and the whole Indian Church to radical discipleship. This radical discipleship demands each one to fight against everything that subverts the dignity of the human person. The Indian Catholic Church today needs this radical discipleship. If it follows Jesus in a radical way, it will challenge the caste system and its influence in the Church, which undermines the dignity of the Christian-Untouchables. Here Metz is insisting on political and mystical compassion for the Christian-Untouchables. This compassion, in order to destroy casteism and its discrimination, should be the primary concern of the Indian Church in today's context. This compassion will remove Christian-Untouchables from their cross and combat casteism within the Church. Like Good Samaritan, the primary concern of the Indian Catholic Church is not to do theology in the context of a religious pluralism, but to do theology in a mystical and political way to eliminate the inequalities and discrimination arising out of casteism.

ABBREVIATIONS

CBCI	The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India
CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
DI	<i>Dominus Iesus</i>
LG	<i>Lumen Gentium</i>
LThk	<i>Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche</i>
MEP	Missions <i>Etageres de Paris</i>

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Abstract

This thesis attempts to implement the new political theology of Metz in the Indian context, where casteism and its discrimination still prevail at various levels. Caste is the social evil of Indian society. It destroys social harmony and development. This same social evil has infiltrated the Catholic Church since the beginning of the process of conversion. The Indian Catholic Church, caught in the clutches of casteism, fails to witness to the values of the Gospel. In these circumstances, it is the new political theology of Metz that summons the whole Indian Catholic Church to look critically at itself, correct its error and be a true witness of Gospel in India.

The caste system, which hits the untouchables hardest in Indian society, hits the Christian-Untouchables even harder. They converted to Christianity in the hope of being emancipated from caste discrimination. But their hope has been turned upside down and they face the worst kind of discrimination within the church. In this tragic situation of caste discrimination, the new political theology of Metz promises the Christian-Untouchables an eschatological hope. This eschatological hope that Metz proposes here is not something that awaits us in the future as the heavenly Jerusalem. Rather, it is to be created where we live, and each individual Christian, as a true disciple of Jesus, should work for it. The eschatological hope of the future promised by God requires every Christian individual to confront the unjust system and structures in society and to work for universal peace and justice. The Catholic Church in India is therefore committed to work for the realization of this eschatological hope. To bring peace and justice to the Christian-Untouchables, it should challenge and fight against the unjust caste structure and system in the Church. For the realization of this eschatological hope, and with it a promised future of universal peace and justice, there is an urgent need for political compassion. The political theology of Metz insists that amid suffering and discrimination, compassionate solidarity with the victims is necessary. Thus, this compassionate solidarity on the part of the Indian Catholic Church towards the Christian-Untouchables is demanded by the political theology of Metz. In this way, the new political theology of Metz brings a new vision to the Indian Catholic Church as a whole to work for the eschatological hope of bringing about universal justice and peace. In the light of the new political theology of Metz, the Catholic Church in India must be in solidarity with the victims of caste discrimination

and should fight hard for the eradication of caste not only from the Church but also from the Indian society where it exists.

Abstrakt

Diese Masterarbeit versucht, die Neue Politische Theologie von Metz auf den indischen Kontext zu übertragen, in dem das Kastendenken und seine Diskriminierung auf verschiedenen Ebenen noch immer vorherrschen. Die Kaste ist das soziale Übel der indischen Gesellschaft. Sie zerstört die Harmonie in der Gesellschaft und behindert die Entwicklung. Dasselbe soziale Übel hat die katholische Kirche seit Beginn des Bekehrungsprozesses infiltriert. Die indische katholische Kirche, die in den Fesseln des Kastensystems gefangen ist, versäumt es, die Werte des Evangeliums zu bezeugen. Unter diesen Umständen ist es die neue politische Theologie von Metz, die die gesamte indische katholische Kirche dazu aufruft, sich selbst kritisch zu betrachten, ihre Fehler zu korrigieren und ein wahrer Zeuge des Evangeliums in Indien zu sein.

Das Kastensystem, das die Unberührbaren in der indischen Gesellschaft am härtesten trifft, trifft die christlichen Unberührbaren noch härter. Sie konvertierten zum Christentum in der Hoffnung, von der Kastendiskriminierung befreit zu werden. Aber ihre Hoffnung wurde enttäuscht, und sie sehen sich mit der schlimmsten Art von Diskriminierung innerhalb der Kirche konfrontiert. In dieser tragischen Situation der Kastendiskriminierung verspricht die neue politische Theologie von Metz den christlichen Unberührbaren eine eschatologische Hoffnung. Diese eschatologische Hoffnung, die Metz hier vorschlägt, ist nicht etwas, das uns in der Zukunft als das himmlische Jerusalem erwartet. Sie soll sich vielmehr dort ereignen, wo wir leben, und jeder einzelne Christ soll sich als wahrer Jünger Jesu dafür einsetzen. Die eschatologische Hoffnung auf die verheißene Zukunft von Gott verlangt von jedem einzelnen Christen, sich den ungerechten Systemen und Strukturen in der Gesellschaft entgegenzustellen und sich für universalen Frieden und universale Gerechtigkeit einzusetzen. Die katholische Kirche in Indien ist daher verpflichtet, sich für die Verwirklichung dieser eschatologischen Hoffnung einzusetzen. Um den christlichen Unberührbaren Frieden und Gerechtigkeit zu bringen, sollte sie die ungerechte Kastenstruktur und das Kastensystem in der Kirche herausfordern und bekämpfen.

Für die Verwirklichung dieser eschatologischen Hoffnung und damit einer verheißenen Zukunft universalen Friedens und universaler Gerechtigkeit ist politisches Compassion dringend erforderlich. Die politische Theologie von Metz betont die Notwendigkeit einer mitfühlenden Solidarität mit den Opfern inmitten von

Leid und Diskriminierung. Diese mitfühlende Solidarität der indischen katholischen Kirche mit den christlichen Unberührbaren wird also von der politischen Theologie von Metz gefordert. Auf diese Weise bringt die neue politische Theologie von Metz der gesamten indischen katholischen Kirche eine neue Vision, sich für die eschatologische Hoffnung auf universale Gerechtigkeit und Frieden einzusetzen. Im Licht der neuen politischen Theologie von Metz muss sich die katholische Kirche in Indien mit den Opfern der Kastendiskriminierung solidarisieren und hart dafür kämpfen, dass die Kaste nicht nur in der Kirche, sondern auch in der indischen Gesellschaft, wo sie existiert, beseitigt wird.