

Children of God, Not Castes

A Response to Caste-Based Theology

Reflections Crossing Every Boundary: God's Love for All People

WhatsApp post, 26 September 2023

I read somewhere about what is called Dalit Christian Theology. The post propagated not just a theology for Dalits, but hinted at a Brahminic-tinged theology for others, further extending the idea to God as a Dalit deity! This occasioned my posting these thoughts on the subject. I expect others to respond. Here goes:

As a devotee of the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ, the very concept of caste-based theology outrages me. Aside from economic inequality, Jesus advocated a comprehensive reconciliation of social disparities. Under the protection of one God, believers have equal standing as God's children. I am equally disturbed by the assertion that all Christians, with the exception of Dalits who have embraced Christianity, adhere to a theology influenced by Brahminic ideas. The author unabashedly extends this idea to God, transforming Him into a Dalit deity. This teaching is nothing but blasphemous.

Theology is the contextualised knowledge of God. It must penetrate believers' inner selves, making it more personal in nature. Jesus instructed us to care for the oppressed and the disadvantaged. He did not instruct us to help them remain classified. He desires that we elevate them economically, socially, spiritually, and morally. That would require their integration with other believers, abandoning their caste stigma. It would therefore be counterproductive to produce theological ideas that retain their previous social standing.

It is important to remember that Jesus Himself challenged societal norms and social hierarchies during His time on earth. He reached out to the marginalised and the rejected, showing that no one is beyond God's love and acceptance. As followers of Jesus, we should strive to emulate His teaching, and work towards a society where everyone is treated as equal.

In doing so, we can create a more just and equitable world, where individuals are not defined by their caste or social status, but by their inherent worth as children of God. This requires us to challenge and reject, actively, any theology or belief system that perpetuates discrimination or inequality.

It is crucial to approach theology with an open mind and a willingness to evaluate critically the teachings we encounter. We must ensure that our theological ideas align with the principles of love, justice, and

equality that Jesus taught us. Only by doing so can we truly live out our faith, and work towards a world free from caste-based discrimination and inequality.

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