



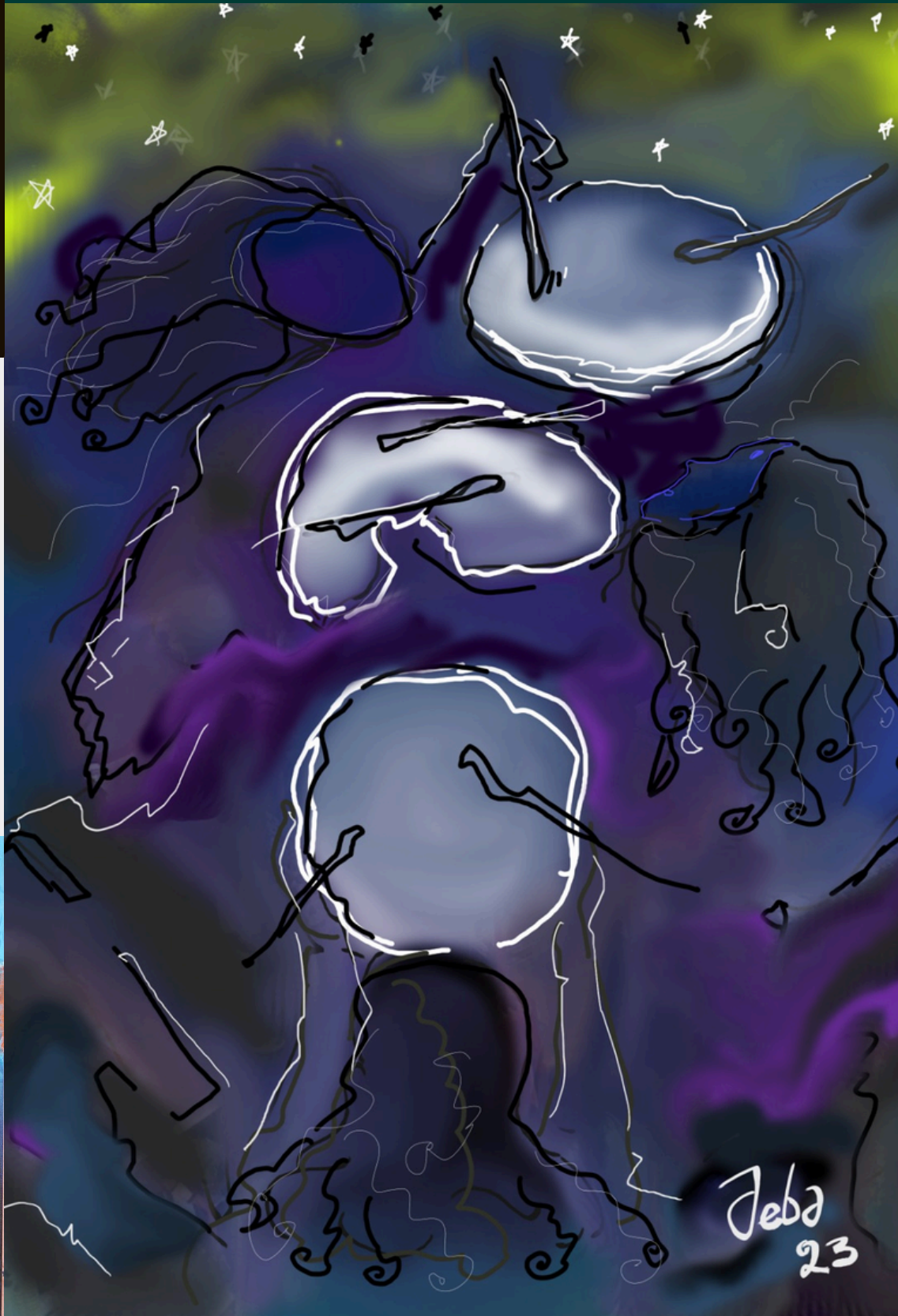
QUATERLY NEWSLETTER

April
2025



“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:28



LETTER FROM OUR EDITOR

“From Shadows to the Stars” is more than a painting. It is a cry from the margins—a lament transformed into resistance, a resurrection hymn drawn in dark blues and starlit skies. Created by Dalit Christian artist Rev. Jebasingh Samuel, this evocative work honors the memory of Rohit Vemula, whose life and death have become symbols of caste injustice, intellectual silencing, and spiritual betrayal.

At the heart of the artwork, young girls beat the Parai—a traditional Dalit drum once silenced by caste taboos. Their rhythm is not merely music; it is a declaration of identity, a confrontation with history. Each beat echoes the struggles and hopes of generations, and each star above them burns with the memory of those who dared to resist. The sky becomes sacred—where the broken are remembered, where silence becomes song.

"They can only destroy my body, steal my property, insult me — but they cannot touch my creativity."

— **Rev. Jebasingh Samuel**
(@Jebasingh_Rayar)

April is now being observed as Dalit Theology Month—a time for churches, seminaries, and communities to center the experiences and insights of Dalit Christians who have long been excluded from mainstream theological discourse.

In this Easter season, as we remember the resurrection of Jesus—a brown-skinned carpenter from Nazareth crucified by empire—we also remember that resurrection is not only about rising from the dead. It is the refusal to be buried by systems of oppression, hatred, and silence.





NDCW Programs Update

January 3 – Tamil Nadu & Puducherry

NDCW organized a state-level consultation on discriminatory practices faced by Dalit Christians in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. The meeting served as a vital platform to share lived experiences and to foster collective reflection. A total of 35 participants attended.

Fr. Devasagayaraj delivered the opening session titled “What is Discrimination?” and addressed how institutional structures within the Church perpetuate marginalization of Dalit Christians.

Advocate Franklin Ceaser Thomas followed with a powerful presentation on “Discriminatory Practices in Tamil Nadu and Legal Remedies for Discrimination and Untouchability.”

Fr. Selva concluded with a session on institutional action plans to combat discrimination, outlining both micro- and macro-level strategies. A group discussion followed, during which participants developed actionable plans aligned with NDCW’s future goals.



January 4

–Odisha (Sambalpur)

A similar state-level discussion was held in Sambalpur, Odisha, with 18 participants. The focus was on the need for Christian institutions to acknowledge caste-based discrimination within their communities. Key recommendations included:

- Establishing clear anti-discrimination policies
- Conducting training and awareness programs
- Empowering Dalit Christians in decision-making roles

This dialogue marked a crucial step in addressing hidden discrimination within Church structures in Odisha.

January 8

– Bihar (Patna)

Held at Sewa Kendra, Patna, with 27 participants, this session featured Dr. Fr. Luise Prakash, who addressed the historical roots of caste-based discrimination. He emphasized the continuing impact of dominant caste hierarchies on Dalit Christians. Group discussions highlighted the need for:

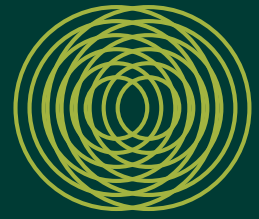
- Leadership development opportunities
- Training for clergy and laity
- Policy revisions to foster inclusivity



January 19

-NDCW Treasurers' Meeting at PARA

The NDCW team convened its Treasurers' Meeting to discuss financial planning, resource mobilization, and accountability frameworks for upcoming initiatives.



February 1 – Kerala

A state-level meeting in Kerala brought together diocesan representatives, evangelists, and activists to address caste discrimination in the Church.

Fr. Selvaraj asserted that caste and Christianity are fundamentally incompatible, echoing NDCW's core message.

Dr. Jestin T. Varghese explored the “silent discrimination” practiced within dominant caste Christian groups in Kerala. Dr. Tiji P.V. presented data on the socio-economic challenges faced by Dalit Catholic Christians, particularly in Mannanam, Kottayam. A Q&A session allowed participants to reflect on constitutional rights and their relevance in the current ecclesial context.



February 14 – Andhra Pradesh (Guntur)

The state-level meeting in Guntur saw robust participation from over 80 individuals, including clergy, community leaders, and activists.

Speakers included Fr. Bosco S.J. and Mr. Sleeva Galleli, who emphasized the importance of amplifying Dalit Christian voices within religious and public institutions. The dialogue fostered solidarity and mapped out strategies for grassroots action.



February 26
-Gujarat (Anand)

A powerful consultation titled *“Unveiling the Ulterior Discriminatory Practices Against Dalit Christians”* was held at Ashadeep Human Development Centre, with 37 participants.

Fr. Selvaraj Arulnathan addressed the institutional layers of caste-based discrimination in Christian settings.

Mr. Martin Macwan examined the historical exclusion of Dalit Christians in Gujarat.

Dr. Michael Martin spoke on resistance strategies, highlighting both victories and ongoing challenges.

Mrs. Jayaben emphasized the importance of Dalit Christian women’s leadership and empowerment.

Mr. Rati Lal explored the double-edged role of education in both reinforcing and dismantling caste hierarchies.

The event encouraged open, dynamic discussions among all participants.



Acknowledgement of Support

NDCW proudly presented a letter of appreciation to Hon. Member of Parliament Dr. Thol. Thirumavalavan for his unwavering advocacy for the inclusion of Dalit Christians in the Scheduled Caste (SC) category. His bold appeal to the Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment stands as a symbol of resistance against injustice and a beacon of hope for the Dalit Christian community.





**March 6-7
- Andhra Pradesh (Uttarandhra and
Ubayya Godavari)**

This regional meeting brought together 45 participants to deliberate on caste-based discrimination and resistance.

Sr. Manju, NDCW National Secretary, gave an overview of the organization's journey and mission. Eminent speakers included:

- Rev. Dr. Manchala Deenabandhu, on rising Hindutva ideologies and their implications
- Mr. Jyothi Neelaiah, on the lived experiences of Dalit Christians
- Mr. Samuel Anand Kumar, IAS (Retd.), on the silencing of caste in Andhra Pradesh
- Mr. Penki Chittibabu, who led a vibrant group discussion session
- The event inspired youth engagement and collective strategizing.



March 26-28 -National Strategy Planning Workshop (Bangalore)



NDCW held a three-day Strategy Planning Workshop at ISI, Bangalore, focused on re-evaluating its mission and structure in light of contemporary socio-political realities. Participants collectively reviewed objectives, strengthened governance systems, and developed a forward-looking roadmap for NDCW's advocacy and outreach efforts.





Women Empowerment Initiatives

Celebrating Women's Day

– Honouring Women Leaders

On the occasion of International Women's Day 2025, the Diocese of Kannur Social Service Society organized a vibrant and inspiring event titled “Women Conclave”, aimed at recognizing and celebrating the contributions of distinguished women leaders from diverse sectors of civil society. We are proud to share that Ms. Pushpa Christy, the State Coordinator of NDCW Kerala, was among the women honoured at the conclave for her unwavering commitment to the cause of Dalit Christian rights and women's empowerment. Her recognition stands as a testament to the impactful grassroots work carried out by NDCW leaders.

Mrs. Jesse Peter Kalil, who recently earned a Doctorate in Theology with her research focused on “Theological Perspectives on Social Development in India.” Her academic work bridges the gap between faith and social justice, making a significant contribution to theological discourse in the context of marginalized communities.

Meanwhile, the NDCW Haryana team also marked International Women’s Day with great enthusiasm. Under the leadership of State Convenor Ms. Dimple Masih, various activities were held to celebrate the achievements of women and raise awareness about gender justice and equality within faith-based and social institutions.

These programs reflect NDCW’s ongoing commitment to amplifying women’s voices, promoting gender equity, and fostering leadership among Dalit Christian women across India.



NDCW Collaborations and Engagements



Strengthening Solidarity, Building Justice

**“For we are co-workers
in God’s service”
-1 Corinthians 3:9**

23 JANUARY

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

On the 6th day of the Unity Octave, celebrated at Good Shepherd’s Cathedral, Hyderabad, Sr. Manju, National Secretary of NDCW, delivered a powerful homily during The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2025.

A passionate orator, human rights activist, and recipient of the Archbishop Oscar Romero Brilliant Star Award, Sr. Manju brought attention to the importance of unity, justice, and equal dignity within the Christian community, especially for the marginalized.



20 FEBRUARY

Anti-Human Trafficking Stakeholders' Meeting

NDCW participated in a collaborative stakeholders’ meeting organized by the PUSH Network at Bible Bhavan, addressing the grave issue of human trafficking. The gathering brought together representatives from various institutions and organizations committed to collective action against this human rights violation.



21 FEBRUARY

Honouring the Legacy of Dr. Flex Wilfred

NDCW proudly represented at ISPCCK during a tribute event in memory of the late Dr. Flex Wilfred, a prophetic voice in the theological and social justice arena. His work addressing the plight of Dalit Christians continues to inspire many. His contributions through literature and leadership were recognized and celebrated as a legacy that calls for ongoing reflection and action.



27 FEBRUARY

Meeting with Church Leaders in Gujarat

In a significant moment of ecclesial dialogue, the NDCW team met with His Excellency Athanasius Rethna Swamy, Bishop of Ahmedabad, and His Grace Thomas Macwan, Archbishop of Gandhinagar. The meeting focused on the challenges faced by Dalit Christians in Gujarat. The dialogue was both productive and hopeful, marking an important step toward collaborative change.



3 MARCH

Theological Engagement with Vidhya Jyoti

Br. Julius from Vidhya Jyoti addressed theological students and missionaries about the ongoing work and mission of NDCW. The discussion emphasized the critical role of lay ministry in fostering equality within the Church. The engagement was encouraging, with students and missionaries showing great interest in supporting inclusive ministry initiatives.

Christ and Caste cannot go together
NDCW

DALIT CHRISTIAN WATCH

National Dalit Christian Watch is a social justice movement within the Church

It began with an analysis of the status of Dalit Christians (DCs) at several levels within the Churches
As a response – NDCW was founded on March 11, 2016 :

VOCATION TO BRING HEALING

DIGNITY OF PERSONS AFFIRMATION: Lk 19:9-10

LISTEN COMPASSIONATE

Household missionaries Dalit Christian Watch

Jesus & Justice

DO NOT TOUCH THE TELEVISION SCREEN AND CAMERA

10 MARCH

The Karl Küble Foundation for Child and Family hosted a national workshop titled: **“Capacity Building for MPOs in India Towards Establishing a Safe Environment for Vulnerable Groups Against Sexual Abuse and Exploitation.”**

The three-day program brought together key stakeholders, including the Para team and a Documentarist from NDCW, who actively participated in discussions, learning modules, and collaborative sessions.



On March 25, 2025, Pastor Praveen Pagadala—an influential voice for justice from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana—was found dead under suspicious circumstances near Rajahmundry. Though initially suggested as an accident, eyewitness reports and evidence point to possible foul play. His bike was found atop his body, his face disfigured, and a boot mark pressed into his chest. Blood-stained wooden splinters at the site raise further concerns. Pastor Praveen was known for speaking boldly against discrimination and advocating for Christian and minority rights.

His death follows a pattern of intimidation faced by those who stand up against rising hate and fascism in India. Despite ongoing protests demanding a fair investigation, several media houses have attempted to downplay the incident, focusing instead on tarnishing his image. His passing echoes the tragic silencing of other human rights defenders like Fr. Stan Swamy and Gauri Lankesh. According to the United Christian Forum, over 834 attacks on Christians have already been recorded in 2024—an alarming rise from previous years. Increasing use of anti-conversion laws and growing impunity continue to endanger the Christian community's right to worship, speak, and live freely.

Pastor Praveen’s voice may have been silenced, but his courage continues to inspire

*~Ms. Sonima,
South Region Coordinator*



In Memory of
**PASTOR
PRAVEEN PAGADALA**

How many voices must be silenced before we recognize the quiet deletion of truth, justice, and faith in our nation?

FROM WORSHIP TO WARSHIP

THE STRUGGLE AND THE HOPE OF RESURRECTION

I recently came across a powerful image online that read, “Forget worship, you need warship.” It startled me — not because it was wrong, but because it spoke a painful truth.

Today, we Dalit Christians often find ourselves at war — not with outsiders, but with the very Church we call home. We are fighting for dignity, for equal space, for leadership, and for justice. In this struggle, worship has become a luxury, and resistance, a necessity.

But as we enter the season of Easter, we are reminded of something deeper. Easter is not just a celebration of Christ’s resurrection — it is the triumph of life over death, justice over injustice, and hope over despair. The cross was a symbol of suffering, but the resurrection transformed it into a symbol of victory.

*We, as Dalit Christians, are living our own Good Friday. We are nailed by discrimination, silenced by power, and crucified by centuries of caste oppression — even within the Church. But Easter reminds us: **This is not the end.***

The fight for our rights is not separate from our faith — it is a reflection of it. Jesus Himself stood with the marginalized, the outcast, and the voiceless. He challenged religious hypocrisy and broke social barriers. To walk in His footsteps is not only to worship Him, but also to follow Him into the spaces where justice is denied.

So yes, for now, we may need “warship.” But our struggle is not without purpose. We fight not to destroy the Church, but to resurrect it — to help it rise from the grave of caste and become truly the body of Christ.

Resurrection is not just an event — it is a process. It begins in the soil of suffering and grows into the light of new life. We believe that one day, worship and justice will no longer be in conflict. One day, we will not have to fight to be seen, heard, or valued in our own faith community. One day, the Church will rise with us — not above us.

This Easter, let us remember: the tomb is empty, and hope is alive. Our fight is holy. Our struggle is sacred. And our resurrection is coming.

“HE IS NOT HERE; HE HAS RISEN!”

– LUKE 24:6

