

The Need for Practical Theology in a Broken World: Invoking Walter Benjamin's Critique of Modernity and Call for Divine Violence and Justice as a Response to Inequality

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Abstract—The integration of Walter Benjamin's sociocultural critique in practical theology to systematic inequality and social fragmentation. The research uses a qualitative, interdisciplinary technique that combines critical hermeneutics and thematic analysis, based on five in-depth interviews as primary data from oppressed communities and considerable secondary material. The paper examines how practical theology might be a transformational force that can address systemic oppression by addressing Benjamin's critique of modernity. It contends that a convincing foundation for promoting justice and eliminating systematic marginalization is provided by faith-informed praxis, which is based on practical theological thought and societal engagement. The study contributes to current discussions on how practical theology might promote social change in the face of enduring injustice.

Index Terms—Critique of Modernity, Practical Theology, Social Inequality, Walter Benjamin.

INTRODUCTION

A "Fractured State" is a society fundamentally split by systematic inequality, social exclusion, and economic imbalances, hurting cohesiveness and progress. In such a state, institutions typically fail to address the demands of excluded people, weakening faith in governance. The majority faces structural obstacles, while a fortunate and favoured minority enjoy concentrated wealth and possibilities. Class, ethnic, and cultural divides are deepened, leading to estrangement and alienation. Rapid social, political, and technical development increasingly isolates vulnerable groups. A fragmented state needs structural changes based on fairness, inclusiveness, and social justice to restore societal balance. This is because it represents the collapse of unity and collective responsibility.

Moreover, economic disparities, structural inequality, alienation, and widespread social inequities are major characteristics of the "fractured state" of the globe today. Historical injustices, long-standing power structures, and exploitative institutions that sustain marginalization are the causes of these divisions. Large populations are caught in cycles of poverty and marginalization because of socioeconomic disparities, which show up as unequal access to opportunities, healthcare, education, and resources. These disparities are widened by social injustices, which erect obstacles to justice and equity.

The gap between the rich elite and those on the margins has grown because of social inequality. Economic policies frequently put profit before people, which concentrates wealth in the hands of a select few while leaving the majority without social safety, job instability, and stagnating wages. These discrepancies are usually reinforced by societal institutions and policies, which hinder social mobility and marginalize disadvantaged populations. In contradiction, technology improvements that foster solitude in hyperconnected communities also aggravate alienation. As xenophobia and populism increase—often driven by political leaders looking to capitalize on people's fears and grievances for their political gain—cultural, racial, and religious divisions deepen. To restore societal balance and rethink social and economic structures, a fragmented state needs structural changes based on fairness, inclusiveness, and social justice. This is because it represents the collapse of unity and collective responsibility.

In the face of contemporary issues marked by structural injustice, social marginalization, and environmental deterioration, traditional remedies frequently fall short. These remedies, which are based on antiquated paradigms, frequently prioritize band-aid measures over addressing the main causes of systemic problems. Economic policies designed to reduce poverty, for example, sometimes prioritize growth measures without redistributing income or guaranteeing fair access to resources, which maintains structural imbalances. In a similar vein, social reforms may address prejudice and other signs of inequality without destroying the power structures that support them.

Furthermore, traditional methods frequently depend on hierarchical governance systems that are inaccessible and do not give voice to underrepresented groups. The intricacy of contemporary problems necessitates comprehensive, intersectional, and community-driven remedies, which these top-down approaches ignore. The inability of traditional solutions to adjust to the quick changes in technology, culture, and the economy of the twenty-first century is another drawback. Therefore, rather than encouraging paradigm shifts, these strategies run the danger of maintaining the status quo. Modern crises require creative, inclusive, and systemically based solutions that put equality and long-term sustainability ahead of short-term cures.

In a fractured state, theology—especially practical theology—is a potent but underutilized instrument for bringing about transformational justice. practical theology addresses real-world challenges through thoughtful interaction with social, economic, and political realities. It bridges the gap between faith and action, whereas theology has often been seen as abstract or restricted to religious settings. Because of its interdisciplinary character, it can bring together theories from other disciplines creating a dynamic framework for discussing structural injustice and inequality. Practical theology can address the underlying causes of injustice because of its emphasis on lived experiences and community-oriented actions. Its focus on holistic treatment and Koinonia (community) is in line with the demand for inclusive and participatory methods of social change. Furthermore, practical theology provides a prophetic voice by opposing oppressive structures and promoting structural change. It gives moral validity to movements that address injustice, and marginalization, by drawing on theological principles like justice as a divine mandate and imago Dei, the notion that all persons were created in God's image.

Employing advocacy and Diaconal (service-oriented) activity, practical theology also strengthens marginalized communities in situations of structural injustice. It promotes healing in broken communities by strongly emphasising intercultural conviviality, empowerment, and reconciliation. In academic and policy discourses on justice, practical theology is still understudied despite its transformational potential. By incorporating practical theology into social justice initiatives, nations may rethink how they deal with injustice and provide a moral and ethical framework that supports pragmatic approaches. The practical theological paradigm provides a special approach to seeing justice as an achievable, community-driven reality based on compassion and solidarity rather than a far-off aspiration.

Building on this potential, to overcome systematic inequity, practical theology might be revitalized through Walter Benjamin's criticism of modernity and his concepts of divine violence and justice. Benjamin's writings provide a philosophical foundation that is particularly relevant to critique the alienation and commercialization that characterize contemporary cultures, where social and economic structures uphold injustice in the name of progress. His focus on exposing the mythological violence of oppressive regimes exposes how these systems use myths of power and inevitable fate to maintain inequity.

In contrast to mythological violence, Benjamin's conception of divine violence signifies a fundamental break with oppressive structures. It represents transformational rather than punitive justice, ending the cycles of exploitation and dominance that modernity has maintained. To address structural injustice and theological culpability in maintaining such systems, practical theology might use this theological resonance as a critical lens. Benjamin's criticism, for example, might be used by practical theology to reframe theological communities as places of justice, reconciliation, and resistance.

By embracing Benjamin's perspectives, practical theology can restore its prophetic voice and challenge prevailing narratives. Acknowledging justice as a divine commandment moves the emphasis from institutional upkeep to active engagement with underrepresented voices. By opposing systems that sustain injustice, Benjamin's theories might offer a fresh approach to practical theology to advance a transformative praxis founded on equality, solidarity, and divine justice. Furthermore, practical theology's emphasis on the immediacy of lived experiences is consistent with Benjamin's emphasis on the "now-time (Jetztzeit)."^{1,2} It demands real-time, situation-specific solutions to inequality that go beyond gradualist strategies. The convergence of Benjamin's philosophical theology reframes the latter as an active force for systemic change rather than only a contemplative one. By doing this, it gives theology the tools it needs to successfully negotiate the challenges of modernity and address the pressing problems of inequality with fresh insight and significance.

WALTER BENJAMIN'S CRITIQUE OF MODERNITY

The Dehumanizing Effects of Capitalism

Despite encouraging innovation and economic success, capitalism has drawn a lot of criticism for its dehumanizing consequences on people and civilizations. Fundamentally, capitalism reduces humans to mere instruments in the quest for financial gain, placing efficiency and profit above the welfare of humanity. In his critique of modernity, Walter Benjamin shed light on how capitalism commodifies human labour, distances workers from their jobs, and maintains structural inequalities. According to Benjamin, First, capitalism is a genuine cult religion—possibly the most radical one in history. Things under capitalism only make sense when connected to the cult; There is no theology or a particular body of dogma under capitalism. The essence of the capitalist religious movement is perseverance through to the end, to the extent that the universe has been overtaken by that despair, which is truly its hidden hope, to the point where God himself finally bears the whole weight of guilt. Capitalism relieves the same fears, sufferings, and disruptions that the so-called religions purported to address.³ Secondly, in the West, capitalism has evolved as a parasite of Christianity (this needs to be demonstrated not only for Calvinism but also for other orthodox Christian churches) until it got to the point where the history of Christianity is essentially the history of capitalism, which is its parasite. He further said that if capitalism is allowed to run amok, it will eventually result in a system that resembles socialism—albeit in a distorted and perhaps harmful fashion. Debt accumulation is the primary driver of this shift (Schuld). There is more to the German term "Schuld" than just "debt." It embraces the principles of moral duty, obligation, and guilt. This makes the argument more complicated. Debt increases rapidly, particularly when compounded (interest

¹ Walter Benjamin, *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings: 1938–1940*, Annotated edition, vol. 4 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2006), 389–400.

² Pinaki Burman, 'According to Walter Benjamin, the Term "Now-Time" (Jetztzeit) Describes a Disruptive Point in History Where Potentially Revolutionary Possibilities Arise. By Highlighting the Pressing Need for Action and Change in the Here and Now, Questions the Linear Passage of Time. This Concept Is in Line with Practical Theology's Emphasis on the Immediateness of Lived Experiences, Which Aims to Address Urgent Problems of Injustice and Inequality as They Arise. Practical Theology Emphasizes Prompt Answers Based on Compassion and Solidarity by Putting the "Now" First, moving beyond Abstract Theory and Interacting Immediately with the Reality of Oppressed Populations. Therefore, Practical Theology Might Use Benjamin's Now-Time as a Theoretical Framework to See Justice as a Tangible, Current Reality Rather than a Lofty Ideal. When Combined, These Perspectives Encourage Immediate, Revolutionary Action That Connects the Dots between Social Change and Religious Contemplation.', n.d.

³ Walter Benjamin, *Walter Benjamin Selected Writings – 1913–1926*, ed. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings, vol. 1 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1996), 288–89.

on interest). As a result, people may become severely indebted and lose control over their financial futures, as may whole societies. Debt frequently disproportionately affects people and communities with lower incomes, escalating already-existing disparities.⁴

The claim that unchecked capitalism invariably results in socialism is a complicated and contentious concept. This opinion is disputed by many political scientists and economists. For instance, Friedrich Hayek, a classical liberal and free-market economist, maintained that government interference in the market, even when done to address alleged market imperfections, might have unforeseen repercussions and eventually impede both individual liberty and economic prosperity. His writings, such as “The Road to Serfdom,” examine the perils of overbearing governmental regulation and support a market-based strategy with little government involvement.⁵ However, Hayek’s opinions on inequality are nuanced and open to debate. Some contend that his focus on personal accountability and little government involvement may be seen as undervaluing the part played by structural causes of inequality. Again, according to Thomas Piketty’s argument in his landmark book “Capital in the Twenty-First Century,” over time, the rate of return on capital tends to surpass economic development. He argues that this dynamic contributes to the concentration of wealth in the hands of a select few. According to Piketty, this unbridled wealth growth might result in extremely high levels of inequality, which could destabilize countries and call for substantial government involvement. His theory of unchecked capital accumulation is like the concept of “simple and compound interest” in that wealth generates riches, which leads to an ever-widening disparity.⁶ I argue that both thinkers, in distinguished ways, highlight how capitalism has the potential to plant the seeds of its destruction if it is allowed to continue unchecked. This could result in a time when the state will need to step in and possibly make more extreme changes to society to address the growing imbalances and the mounting “debt”—both moral and financial. Again, the rise of right-wing populist leaders can be facilitated by the increasing economic inequality and societal instability that Piketty and Benjamin warn about. These populists often take advantage of the fears of those left behind by globalization and technological change, framing these fears as the result of “elites”—both cultural and economic—betraying the “true people.” Populist leaders frequently blame immigrants, minorities, and other marginalized groups for economic problems, deflecting attention from the systemic problems of inequality and the shortcomings of the current system. It is important to recognize that the rise of right-wing populism is a complex phenomenon with many contributing factors and that economic inequality is just one of many.

Benjamin challenges the illusion of perpetual progress and historical materialism in this renowned essay. He talks about how capitalist societies frequently ignore or repress the pain and unfairness brought about by these systems in their quest for advancement. His depiction of the “Angel of History” represents the confusing, destructive power of historical progression, with the “angel” being carried away by the tempest of progress and unable to see the harm done in the name of progress. As cultures grow more disconnected from the actual human cost of progress, this picture emphasizes the sense of alienation and meaninglessness:

This is how the angel of history must look. His face is turned toward the past. Where a chain of events appears before us, he sees one single catastrophe, which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it at his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise and has got caught in his wings; it is so strong that the angel can no longer close them. This storm drives him irresistibly into the future, to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows toward the sky. What we call progress is this storm.⁷

Furthermore, the unrelenting quest for advancement may cause modern existence to lose its purpose. Life might seem to have no larger purpose or direction in a world where materialism is the norm and success is often measured in monetary terms. A society that values efficiency, profit, and personal achievement marginalizes spiritual, emotional, and relational facets of life. Because the quest for advancement appears to ignore the fundamental need for connection, purpose, and human-centred values, individuals suffer from a deep sense of emptiness and alienation. Reflecting on Benjamin’s critique of modernity, one can argue that, in a system where achievement is often judged in monetary terms, people could feel under pressure to put money and professional achievement ahead of more profound existential or social principles. This focus on monetary success leads to a consuming cycle in which individuals turn to material items for fulfilment rather than interpersonal connections, creative pursuits, or spiritual development. Communities disintegrate in favour of individual competitiveness when social connections get commercial. Once based on mutual support and similar ideals, relationships are becoming more and more mediated by market pressures, which reduces personal connections to business dealings. People find it challenging to find a purpose beyond consuming in capitalist cultures since they are discouraged from reflecting on their lives and are always seeking approval from others.

Historical Materialism and Redemption

What type of accomplishment may be deemed praiseworthy if it eventually intensifies social and economic disparities? Philosophies of history are often categorized as progressive or conservative, revolutionary, or nostalgic. However, Walter Benjamin defies these classifications. He simultaneously critiques the philosophy of progress from a revolutionary stance, opposes ‘progressivism’ despite his Marxist leanings, and blends nostalgia with a vision for the future. As a romantic thinker advocating for materialism, Benjamin resists conventional labels, making him truly unique. Adorno aptly described him as a thinker who remained independent of all established intellectual traditions.⁸ Walter Benjamin’s *Theses on the Concept of History* (1940) is a seminal philosophical and political work of the twentieth century. In revolutionary thought, it rivals Marx’s *Theses on Feuerbach* in significance. Rich in imagery, allegory, and paradox, the text offers profound insights through its enigmatic and allusive style.⁹ Romanticism, which goes beyond a simple early nineteenth-century literary or artistic trend, was a major influence on Walter Benjamin’s early philosophical concerns. From Rousseau and Novalis to the Surrealists, romanticism is a broad perspective, a unique way of thinking and feeling that has impacted many different cultural fields. It essentially opposes the automation of life, the monetization of social interactions, and the breakdown of community by critiquing contemporary capitalist society through the prism of pre-modern standards. Romanticism may be both traditionalist and

⁴ Benjamin, 1:289.

⁵ F. A. Hayek, *Road to Serfdom: Text and Documents - the Definitive Edition*, New edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

⁶ Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, Illustrated edition (Cambridge: Harvard Business School Press India Limited, 2014).

⁷ Benjamin, *Walter Benjamin*, 4:392.

⁸ Michael Lowy, *Fire Alarm: Reading Walter Benjamin’s ‘On the Concept of History,’* trans. Chris Turner, Reprint edition (London; New York: Verso Books, 2016), 2.

⁹ Lowy, 4.

revolutionary, however, it is not always reactionary. Revolutionary Romanticism does not seek to go back to the past but instead looks to the past for inspiration on the way to creating a better future.¹⁰

To question established power systems, especially those upheld by conventional historicism, Walter Benjamin redefined historical materialism. Benjamin questions the idea that history is a straight line, which is frequently invoked to defend the supremacy of ruling classes, in his *Theses on the Philosophy of History* (1940). He contends that this perspective legitimizes current power relations by depicting history as an ongoing series of events that inevitably lead to progress. Benjamin suggests a non-linear, ruptured view of history instead, highlighting the significance of grabbing “Messianic moments”—times when oppression may be challenged and revolutionary potential can be fulfilled. He challenges the historicist perspective, which holds that history is a never-ending series of events that inevitably lead to progress. Benjamin instead suggests a non-linear, ruptured understanding of history, contending that prevailing historical narratives frequently overlook the past's many instances of injustice and suffering. He stresses how crucial it is to take advantage of “Messianic moments”—times when oppression may be challenged and revolutionary potential can be fulfilled. In this approach, Benjamin reimagines historical materialism and offers a framework for challenging established power relations. He calls for a re-examination of history that recognizes both the opportunity for change and the anguish endured by the oppressed. This method advocates for a broader understanding of history as a place of struggle and possible redemption, challenging the prevailing narratives that frequently serve to rationalize current structures.¹¹ Thus, he emphasizes that “The subject of historical knowledge is the struggling, oppressed class itself.”¹²

DIVINE VIOLENCE AND JUSTICE

Mythic vs. Divine Violence

In his article “Critique of Violence” (1921), Walter Benjamin proposed the idea of mythological violence, which he defined as the self-sustaining force that uses compulsion to maintain political and legal frameworks. By legitimizing injustice, upholding social hierarchies, and enforcing conformity with force, mythic violence maintains power structures. Mythic violence perpetuates cycles of dominance and subjection, in contrast to divine violence, which Benjamin portrays as a force of justice that upends oppressive hierarchies.¹³ According to this theory, the law is an act of force that becomes established over time rather than a natural sense of fairness. Moreover, when the state creates legal frameworks through invasion, war, or revolution and then uses police, incarceration, and militarism to enforce them, for instance, it is engaging in mythical violence.¹⁴

Butler discusses how Benjamins’ thesis is still applicable in modern circumstances, notably through the lens of systematic state repression, in which institutions wield power under the appearance of legal authority. Examples of how authorities employ violence against vulnerable people to maintain peace include police brutality, mass incarceration, and the death sentence. These regimes perpetuate social inequities by criminalizing dissent and supporting economic and racial disparities. Mass imprisonment is a prime example of how governments use violence against disadvantaged groups to keep the peace. By making dissent illegal and upholding racial and economic inequalities, these systems maintain social injustices.¹⁵ The power that upholds these legal systems is, in fact, rarely contested since the law frequently presents itself as an unbiased and necessary foundation of social order.

In addition, mythological violence is cyclical, which means it maintains power and resurfaces through societal conditioning. Societies embrace systemic coercion as a normal part of administration, internalizing the logic of legendary violence. This acceptance is further ingrained by media narratives, nationalist ideology, and legal language, which obscure the violence required to maintain power systems.¹⁶ Even when legal power upholds injustice, individuals are conditioned by their ideology to confuse it with moral validity. According to Benjamin, divine violence is a power that upends unfair institutions rather than sustaining them, in contrast to mythological violence. According to his theory, divine violence breaks the bonds of systemic violence without establishing new forms of dominance. It does not establish new rules or maintain authority. He refers to the biblical concept of justice, which holds that tyranny is destroyed by divine intervention rather than being replaced by a new hierarchical structure.¹⁷ Finally, repressive legal and political systems are constructed and sustained based on mythical violence. It suppresses dissent and strengthens structural injustices while legitimizing force under the guise of law and order. Gaining an understanding of Benjamin’s criticism enables a more thorough analysis of how power functions and guides opposing and overcoming oppressive structures. Understanding how violence operates in both historical and modern situations demands an awareness of this dichotomy.

Benjamin’s strong disapproval of authority is made clear by this contrast between divine and mythological violence. Divine violence envisions an uprising from all forms of structural injustice, opening the door for freedom and ethical regeneration, whereas mythological violence justifies dominance. Benjamin explains divine violence as an act of justice that surpasses human law by drawing on philosophical and theological traditions. He refers to the biblical doctrine of divine intervention, which destroys oppressive powers without establishing new hierarchies and does not replace one tyranny with another¹⁸. In this way, divine violence is freeing in its nature rather than destructive for the sake of power. Addressing the underlying inequalities ingrained in the political and legal structures disrupts the continuation of mythological violence and ends the cycle of oppression.

Butler contends that modern interpretations of divine violence point to its applicability in social movements that oppose structural injustice and that acts of resistance that rewrite oppressive norms can be interpreted as expressions of divine violence because they aim

¹⁰ Michael Loewy and Robert Sayre, *Romanticism Against the Tide of Modernity*, trans. Catherine Porter (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).

¹¹ Benjamin, *Walter Benjamin*, 4:389–400.

¹² Benjamin, 4:394.

¹³ Walter Benjamin, *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Peter Demetz (New York, NY: RHUS, 1986).

¹⁴ Benjamin.

¹⁵ Judith Butler, *Precarious Life*, Reprint edition (London New York: Verso Books, 2006).

¹⁶ Slavoj Žižek, *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*, First Edition (Picador, 2008).

¹⁷ Benjamin, *Reflections*.

¹⁸ Benjamin.

to destroy unfair systems rather than create new authorities. This viewpoint is consistent with Benjamin's conception of redemption, in which the oppressed are given the ability to regain agency through divine violence without resorting to further acts of violence.¹⁹

Theological Parallels

Theologically speaking, the impressions of messianic justice and divine violence are similar, resonating with Judeo-Christian notions of emancipation. Benjamin's theory is consistent with the biblical conception of divine intervention, which breaks down oppressive structures without establishing new powers. This is clear from the story of Exodus, when freedom from slavery is obtained without the creation of a new oppressive system.²⁰ Theological ideas of prophetic justice, where truth-telling and radical action reveal the fallacy of oppressive institutions, are consistent with Slavoj Žižek's conception of divine violence as a revolutionary act.²¹ This relationship is further clarified by Judith Butler's thesis, which emphasizes how divine violence subverts the performative potential of state violence.²² Christian doctrines of grace and redemption, where justice is attained not by punitive measures but through transformational disruption, are in line with this act of interruption rather than counter-violence. In this approach, divine violence might be described as a type of eschatological justice that exposes the illegitimacy of established hierarchies and opens the door for new social arrangements.

Cavanaugh offers a profound theological criticism pertinent to Benjamin's concept of divine violence in *Torture and Eucharist*, which explores the relationship between state authority, violence, and the Christian community. Cavanaugh examines how authoritarian governments, especially in Pinochet's Chile (1973-90), used torture to break up community cohesion and preserve state power in addition to using it as a method of repression. He makes the case that, in Benjamin's words, such state violence is mythological because it upholds existing power systems while disguising them as security and order. Cavanaugh, however, contrasts this with the Eucharist, which represents divine violence—a force that breaks oppressive structures without attempting to create new hierarchies. The Eucharist provides a redemptive, liberating vision by subverting the state's mythological violence using the reconstitution of communal identity and solidarity through sacramental activities. Therefore, Benjamin's conception of divine violence as a transforming force working toward justice and freedom is in line with Cavanaugh's thinking.²³

Giorgio Agamben discusses in *State of Exception* how contemporary governments keep power by suspending the law and establishing exceptions when the rule of law is no longer applicable. According to Agamben, this method gives authority the illusion of legitimacy while enabling it to function outside of the law. This idea is consistent with Walter Benjamin's criticism of mythological violence, which maintains oppressive cycles and enforces the law by force. Both philosophers demonstrate how legal frameworks may legitimize extreme actions, making distinguishing between legality and violence difficult. Additionally, Agamben's explanation aligns with religious viewpoints on divine power and sovereignty. According to Christian theology, divine law provides justice outside of the realm of earthly power structures and transcends human legal systems. Agamben's criticism challenges theology to address political systems that perpetuate injustice while claiming divine justification and encourages theological contemplation on the abuse of sovereign power. This juncture prompts a reconsideration of divine justice in comparison to human law.²⁴

Finally, by promoting a liberating rupture that echoes theological themes of redemption and prophetic justice, Benjamin's conception of divine violence questions accepted notions of justice. In line with eschatological hope and theological visions of liberation, it reimagines justice as the radical disruption of oppressive systems rather than as law enforcement.

PRACTICAL THEOLOGY: BRIDGING THEORY AND ACTION

Principles of Practical Theology

Practical theology is a dynamic and developing field that connects theology, interdisciplinary study, and community service. Practical theology integrates theoretical insights with practical applications, emphasizing lived experiences in contrast to conventional theological systems that place a higher priority on doctrinal interpretation. Through theological contemplation and action, it addresses societal challenges and examines how religion is practised in daily life.²⁵ According to my understanding, practical theology facilitates an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of individuals and communities, enabling the development of contextually relevant solutions to address their challenges.

Practical theology, which is based on religion, attempts to comprehend how religious principles impact both private and public behaviour. It is very contextual, recognizing that historical, social, and cultural influences shape how people express their religion²⁶. A sophisticated examination of social justice, ethics, and spirituality is made possible by this context-sensitive methodology. According to Osmer, another essential component of practical theology is community-based movement. It strongly emphasises transformational praxis—the use of theological ideas to advance justice and social change. This is consistent with the premise of diakonia, or Christian service, which promotes the empowerment of underserved communities and holistic care. Through action-oriented research and interactive techniques, practical theology encourages cooperative discussions between society and theological communities.²⁷ In summary, practical theology is a dynamic field that combines community service, interdisciplinary research, and faith. Addressing lived

¹⁹ Butler, *Precarious Life*.

²⁰ Werner Hamacher, "'NOW': Walter Benjamin on Historical Time,' in *The Moment: Time and Rupture in Modern Thought*, ed. Heidrun Frieze (Liverpool University Press, 2001), 161–196, <https://doi.org/10.5949/liverpool/9780853239567.003.0009>.

²¹ Žižek, *Violence*.

²² Butler, *Precarious Life*.

²³ William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics, and the Body of Christ*, 1st edition (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Pub, 1998).

²⁴ Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

²⁵ Joyce Ann Mercer et al., *Opening the Field of Practical Theology: An Introduction*, ed. Kathleen A. Cahalan and Gordon S. Mikoski (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014).

²⁶ John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research - Second Edition: Theory*, 2nd edition (London: Scm Pr, 2016).

²⁷ Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans Pub Co, 2008).

experiences and socioeconomic realities pushes the limitations of orthodox theology. By doing this, it provides a significant and influential means of comprehending and expressing theology in a multifaceted, multicultural society.

Resonance with Benjamin's Vision

Walter Benjamin's critique of systematic oppression and practical theology share a dedication to transformational justice. The focus of practical theology is on engaging faith to confront injustices in the actual world and promoting deeds that demonstrate the generosity and justice of God. Benjamin also calls for a change that goes beyond current legal frameworks, criticizing the underlying violence in legal systems that uphold injustice. Both perspectives encourage people and groups to actively participate in tearing down oppressive systems to advance justice that is consistent with moral and religious precepts. This alignment highlights a common goal of putting theology into practice by taking innovative steps to address and correct structural inequalities.

Building on our mutual commitment to justice, Benjamin's theory of "weak Messianic power"²⁸ provides a refined standpoint on the function of religion in bringing about historical redemption through modest but significant deeds of justice. According to Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History," every generation has a "weak Messianic power" that can make up for historical wrongs. This power is demonstrated by little, transformational acts that recognize and right historical wrongs rather than by large-scale efforts.²⁹ From this perspective, theology becomes a driving force for redemption by motivating people and groups to carry out seemingly little acts of justice that help to right historical wrongs. By making amends for chances lost due to systematic oppression, these acts pay tribute to the "unrealized potentiality" of history.³⁰ By acknowledging the "weak Messianic power," theology inspires believers to act justly in their day-to-day lives and promotes an ongoing, introspective engagement with history. This method emphasizes the concept that redemption is a continuous process that is accomplished by accumulating deeds of justice, kindness, and acknowledgement of prior sufferings. This kind of thinking is consistent with Benjamin's perception of history as a place in need of active redemption, wherein the present is accountable for redressing the injustices and unfulfilled expectations of the past.³¹

In my view, presenting theology as a "weak Messianic power" emphasizes its unique capacity to effect historical salvation through deliberate and altruistic deeds. Unlike large, revolutionary campaigns, this approach emphasizes small but significant acts of justice that subtly oppose injustice and contribute to societal change. By focusing on seemingly minor actions in the present and future, theology can address historical injustices in a way that respects past suffering while promoting hope and healing. These actions are intended to initiate meaningful changes that resonate with the ethical and spiritual dimensions of justice rather than impose perfect solutions. In this sense, theology becomes a force for redemption by inspiring communities to confront historical wrongs with humility and love, thus breaking cycles of violence and injustice. This perspective aligns with Walter Benjamin's notion of "weak Messianic power," where redemption is achieved not through dominance but through subtle, transformative gestures. It underscores the ongoing responsibility to address historical wounds while nurturing a vision of justice rooted in empathy and moral integrity for the present and future. However, the limitations of this approach must also be acknowledged. I see that the subtle nature of "weak Messianic power" may not always provide instant change.

PRACTICAL THEOLOGY IN ACTION: CASE STUDIES

Grassroots Movements

In the past, faith-based organizations have been instrumental in combating structural injustices in an array of societies. These programs frequently use community networks and religious beliefs to solve problems, including social injustice, poverty, and prejudice. This section will discuss India's caste structure and how some socio-religious organizations have actively fought against it to advance social justice and equality. As an illustration, several missions have long sought to improve underprivileged areas by offering healthcare and education, therefore challenging long-standing caste systems. These initiatives have raised awareness of caste-based prejudice and promoted social mobility. So, what exactly is the caste system in India?

The archetypal anthropological example of caste-based social categorization is the Indian caste system.³² This concept is ingrained in Hindu culture and is said to have come from ancient writings such as the Vedas and the Manusmriti. Varna³³ served as the original focal point of the caste system, with the upper classes being Brahmins (priests) and, to a lesser degree, Kshatriyas (rulers and warriors). These were followed by the Vaishyas (traders, merchants, and farmers) and the Shudras (laborers). The downtrodden, marginalized, and persecuted Adivasis (tribals) and Dalits (also called "Untouchables") are outside of this system.³⁴ The system became more inflexible over time, and the rise of *jati*³⁵ resulted in its further entrenchment, creating thousands of new castes and sub-castes.³⁶ The caste system affects access to political power, work, healthcare, and education by enforcing social exclusion and prejudice. The indigenous groups known as Dalits and Adivasis experience violence, social exclusion, and structural injustice. Although it is legally prohibited by Article

²⁸ 'Weak Messianic Power Is a Concept Introduced by Walter Benjamin in His Theses on the Philosophy of History. It Alludes to Each Generation's Modest yet Powerful Ability to Identify Past Injustices and Implement Minor yet Impactful Changes to Address Them. Weak Messianic Power Functions by Taking Little Steps That Break Oppressive Patterns and Create Opportunities for Redemption, as Opposed to a Powerful, Transformative Movement That Seeks to Topple the Status Quo. Without Asserting Final Triumph or Closure, It Highlights the Moral Obligation to Remember the Suffering of the Past and React with Acts of Justice, so Supporting the Continuous Process of Historical Redemption.,' n.d.

²⁹ Michael G. Levine, *A Weak Messianic Power: Figures of a Time to Come in Benjamin, Derrida, and Celan* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013).

³⁰ Sami Khatib, 'The Messianic Without Messianism,' *Anthropology & Materialism. A Journal of Social Research*, no. 1 (15 October 2013), <https://doi.org/10.4000/am.159>.

³¹ Jacob Hoerger, 'Historical Injustice and the Politics of Redemption' (Harvard University, 2022), Weak Messianic Power and Benjamin's Contribution to the Debate about Historical...<https://ces.fas.harvard.edu/events/2022/03/on-weak-messianic-power-and-walter-benjamin's-contribution-to-the-debate-about-historical-injustice>.

³² Adheesh A. Sathaye, *Crossing the Lines of Caste: Visvamitra and the Construction of Brahmin Power in Hindu Mythology* (Oxford University Press, 2015), 214.

³³ 'In Hinduism, a "Varna" Is a Social Class That Exists within a Conventional, Hierarchical Hindu Society. Varna Ideology Is Exemplified in Literature Such as Manusmriti, Which Outlines and Classifies Four Varnas and Specifies Their Jobs, Requirements, and Obligations, Also Known as Dharma.,' n.d.

³⁴ Andrea L. Stanton, *Cultural Sociology of the Middle East, Asia, & Africa: An Encyclopaedia*, 1st edition (Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE Publications Inc., 2012), 12–13.

³⁵ 'In the Indian Subcontinent, the Term "Jāti" Is Typically Used to Refer to a Coherent Group of People, Such as a Tribe, Community, Clan, Sub-Clan, or Religious Sect. Every Jāti Usually Has a Connection to a Tribe, Region, or Vocation. Certain Jātis May Also Be Defined through Different Linguistic Groups or Intrareligious Views (Such as Shaivism, Vaishnavism, or Smarthism). The Word Is Frequently Roughly Translated as "Caste" in English.,' n.d.

³⁶ L. A. Basham, *Wonder That Was India: A Survey of the Culture of the Indian Sub-Continent Before the Coming of the Muslims* (New York: Grove Press, 1964), 148.

17 of the Indian Constitution, the practice of untouchability—which forbids physical contact with members of higher castes—continues in many forms.³⁷

The majority of Dalits in India practice Hinduism.³⁸ Dalit Hindus embraced Christianity in large numbers to avoid discrimination.³⁹ They were told that Christianity was the true religion, which fuelled their desire for their children's education, their hope for possible monetary help, their need for protection from oppression, and their knowledge that people who converted to Christianity had better living conditions.⁴⁰ It was generally put into perspective that Christianity was egalitarian and could offer caste-free mobility. Unfortunately, their religious identification was the only thing that changed in some cases. Due to the “residual leftover” caste discrimination from their prior customs, Dalits regularly faced persecution even after conversion to Christianity. This is explained by the fact that their cultural development was dominated by Hindus.⁴¹ The Dalits were referred to as “New Christians” by the churches. Ramesh reports experiencing a lack of proper respect within his previous church community. Following the death of his father, he was denied the right to a Christian burial in the designated cemetery, compelling his family to conduct the burial in their courtyard. This exclusion was attributed to his membership in the Chamar⁴² community, highlighting the persistence of caste-based discrimination within Christian religious practices.⁴³ It is said to be a demeaning word that categorizes Dalit Christians as being despised by other Christians. Dalits were either required to attend mass outside or have segregated seats in certain churches.⁴⁴ According to Manju, she was not allowed to sit in a chair in the church. She brought her mat and took a seat on the pavement outside the church.⁴⁵ Dalit Christians face discrimination in the church because of their profession, and it even goes so far as to deny them access to clean water and sanitation.⁴⁶ Raju claimed that because they worked as manual scavengers, he and his family were prohibited from using the restrooms or obtaining drinking water from the tube well on the church premises. Due to these constraints, they faced great difficulty and anguish while cycling 15 kilometres to the church. Moreover, Dalits' caste-based professions also demonstrate a glaring division that persisted even after they converted to Christianity.⁴⁷ In India, Dalit Christians work in many occupations, including manual scavenging, which is reportedly quite comparable to Dalit Hindus.⁴⁸ Thus, it is an unfortunate reality that when a Dalit embraces Christianity, they are not fully integrated into the body of Christ by the Christian community or churches; instead, they continue to experience the same forms of discrimination within their new religious identity.

This ongoing exclusion from the Christian community serves as a reminder of how deeply ingrained caste-based biases are, even outside of Hindu religious borders. It takes a transformational philosophical strategy in addition to structural adjustments, to address these deeply rooted prejudices. Resolving prejudice against Dalits who have converted to Christianity is the first step towards exercising “weak Messianic power.” Despite their religious change, Dalit Christians nevertheless experience structural injustice and social isolation in Indian culture. In addition to denying people equal opportunity, this prejudice damages their identity and sense of dignity. Moreover, several caste-conscious Christians, while identifying with a socio-religious Christian identity, continue to internalize Brahmanical hegemony within their psychological frameworks. It is a substantial challenge to relinquish the privilege of dominance over others, especially when this power is inherently acquired through birth within a specific community rather than earned. By using “weak Messianic power,” we may take little but significant steps to combat these injustices. This strategy seeks to progressively alter socio-cultural attitudes and institutions by emphasizing little, caring deeds rather than drastic adjustments. According to this theory, every generation has the latent capacity to right historical wrongs by doing conscious, caring acts that upend long-standing power systems. This perspective supports modest but significant initiatives that question social norms that uphold caste-based prejudices in the fight against discrimination against Dalit Christians:

Sukwindar Singh from the Mazhabi Sikh community highlights the continued impact of rigid caste structures within Hindu and Sikh societies, where marginalized groups face discrimination while striving for dignity. Originally lower-caste Hindus who converted to Sikhism for better social standing, Mazhabi Sikhs now face discrimination from upper-caste Sikhs, prompting some to convert to Christianity for social acceptance. Due to the belief that conventional Christian denominations still maintain caste-based customs, more people are opting to join Pentecostal congregations. The self-styled Pentecostal pastors claim to be able to cure cancer and other ailments. They have been indoctrinated into believing that practising any religion other than Christianity will condemn them to damnation. The prospect of a visa to Canada or the United Kingdom is one of the main drivers of conversion. With so many political and socioeconomic problems plaguing the province, Punjab's youth have little hope for the future.⁴⁹

It is significant to mention that Punjabi Christians are currently perceived as less urbanized, uneducated, economically unstable, and backward. By performing deeds that advance equality, justice, and social inclusion for Dalit Christians, they represent this “weak Messianic power.” These might involve promoting equal rights in places of worship, aiding educational programs, and encouraging discussions that heal rifts among communities. Thomas notes that, after embracing Christianity, they were not given proper respect by the upper-caste members within their church. Consequently, they constructed their place of worship using bamboo and tin outside the

³⁷ Sukhadeo Thorat and Katherine Newman, eds., *Blocked by Caste: Economic Discrimination in Modern India* (New Delhi: OUP India, 2009).

³⁸ S. Gurusamy, *Dalit Empowerment in India* (MJP Publisher, 2019).

³⁹ Sobin George, ‘Dalit Christians in India: Discrimination, Development Deficit and the Question for Group-Specific Policies,’ *Indian Institute of Dalit Studies* 6, no. 2 (2012): 1-35.

⁴⁰ ‘Report of the Fourth Decennial Indian Missionary Conference Held in Madras, December 11th-18th, 1902’ (Madras: Sagwan Press, 25 August 2015).

⁴¹ Louis Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and Its Implications*, 2nd edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press WILEY UK, 1981).

⁴² ‘Under the Current Affirmative Action System in India, the Chamar Community Is Categorized as a Scheduled Caste. They Were Once a Group of Traders Who Worked in the Leather Tanning and Shoemaking Professions. They May Be Found throughout the Indian Subcontinent, but Mostly in the Northern Indian States of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar. Their Settlements Are Frequently Found Outside of Upper-Caste Hindu Communities. The Word “Chamar” Is Used to Disparage Dalits in General. According to the Supreme Court of India, It Is a Casteist Slur, and Using It to Refer to Someone Is against the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.’, n.d.

⁴³ Ramesh, Caste Discrimination among Christians: Case Study 1, interview by Pinaki Burman, Live (One-on-One), trans. Pinaki Burman, 26 November 2024.

⁴⁴ Louis Prakash, ‘Caste-Based Discrimination and Atrocities on Dalit Christians and the Need for Reservations,’ Vol 2, Working Paper (New Delhi: Indian Institute of Dalit Studies, 2007).

⁴⁵ Manju, Caste Discrimination among Christians: Case Study 4, interview by Pinaki Burman, Live (One-on-One), trans. Pinaki Burman, 16 November 2024.

⁴⁶ Jose Kananaikil, *Scheduled Caste Converts and Social Disabilities: A Survey of Tamil Nadu* (Indian Social Institute, 1990).

⁴⁷ Raju, Caste Discrimination among Christians: Case Study 5, interview by Pinaki Burman, Live (One-on-One), trans. Pinaki Burman, 19 November 2025.

⁴⁸ Vidya Sagar J. Dogar, *Rural Christian Community in North West India* (Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, 2001).

⁴⁹ Sukwindar Singh, Caste Discrimination among Christians: Case Study 2, interview by Pinaki Burman, Live (One-on-One), trans. Pinaki Burman, 2 December 2024.

village.⁵⁰ Such manifestations of inequality within the body of Christ should have no place in the Christian community. Granting proper respect to marginalized members and fully embracing them within the body of Christ will help eliminate such inequalities within the Christian community. Even if these acts are little, taken together, they help to advance social change and destroy systematic injustice.

Benjamin's paradigm emphasizes acknowledging and fulfilling the moral obligation to address past and present injustices. It urges a persistent determination to oppose oppressive structures employing moral and empathetic action, demonstrating a commitment to transformational justice consistent with theological principles and broader humanistic philosophy. By opposing prejudice based on caste and promoting an inclusive Christian community in India, we use humility and compassion to help bring about historical atonement. This viewpoint embodies the transforming potential of "weak Messianic power" in our modern society by opposing repressive regimes and advancing justice based on moral integrity and spiritual compassion.

Faith and Advocacy

The dynamic discipline of practical theology connects theological contemplation with practical engagement, with a special emphasis on supporting underrepresented groups by working with social institutions and legislators. This field focuses on applying religious concepts to practical problems to change the social systems that support injustice and inequality. To promote laws and public policies that impact underprivileged populations, practical theologians need to regularly interact with legislators. They can improve policy conversations on social justice, human rights, and economic inequities by offering moral frameworks and ethical insights rooted in religious traditions. To combat poverty and injustice, for example, Christian theological concepts of stewardship and social justice have been applied in Nigeria. These principles support fair distribution and prudent resource management, which guide policies meant to address structural economic disparities.⁵¹

To create conditions that assist marginalized groups, practical theology goes beyond legislative involvement and includes cooperation with a range of social institutions, such as healthcare systems, educational institutions, and religious organizations. Practical theologians, for instance, have critically analyzed South African universities that are still rooted in discriminatory practices and colonial legacies. They want to decolonize education by promoting socially fair pedagogies, which will result in inclusive environments that value and promote many cultural narratives.⁵² Furthermore, practical theologians address concerns of structural prejudice within religious organizations. This strategy is best shown by the work of Nyambura Njoroge, who has led the way in African Christian feminist ethics, which aims to free women from patriarchal systems and repressive theologies found in churches as well as theological institutions. These organizations have transformed because of her work to become forums for social justice and gender equality.⁵³ In conclusion, practical theology unites theology and action by supporting marginalized populations through ethical guidance, cooperation, and social justice to preserve human rights and dignity.

Building on this foundation, to address complicated societal challenges that are outside the purview of any one field (theology), interdisciplinary collaboration has become essential. According to research on domestic and family violence, an interdisciplinary Community of Practice was established, bringing together experts from several disciplines to develop cutting-edge methods of instruction and learning. The goal of this group endeavour was to address the complex issue of domestic abuse, acknowledging the involvement of social, psychological, legal, and economic aspects.⁵⁴ For instance, to ensure that all facets of a patient's well-being are taken care of, social workers frequently work in conjunction with physicians, psychologists, and educators to create comprehensive care plans for patients in the healthcare industry.⁵⁵ Interdisciplinary collaboration is a significant instrument for solving complicated societal challenges. However, the challenges associated with Benjamin's concept of "divine violence" will be discussed in the next section.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Challenges

Instigating discussions in the fields of philosophy, theology, and politics, Walter Benjamin's articles have been both important and controversial. Several issues are at the heart of these conversations. To undermine legal frameworks, Benjamin presents the concept of "divine violence," a type of violence that exists outside of legal systems. The concept has given rise to misunderstandings since some readers have interpreted it as endorsing actual, physical violence. Benjamin's goal is more complex, though; he wants to investigate the violence that exists naturally in legal systems as well as the possibility of a transformational force that upends unfair institutions without fostering additional violence. This misunderstanding highlights how intricate his concepts are and how thorough interpretation is required. Benjamin's revolutionary thoughts are frequently met with resistance by traditional institutions, especially those that have an interest in preserving the status quo. His criticism casts doubt on the validity of long-standing legal and political structures, causing defensive responses from organizations that value continuity over change. The conflict between progressive theoretical claims and the practical considerations of institutional maintenance is highlighted by this opposition.

Benjamin's writings fall somewhere between political action and theological contemplation. Although his concepts have a lot of theoretical depth, it can be difficult to turn them into workable plans. To ensure that theoretical insights influence practice without causing unintended repercussions, it is important to evaluate the abstract character of concepts like "divine violence" carefully to prevent their misapplication in practical settings. Benjamin's idea of divine violence is indeed hard to operationalize within current legal systems since it is vague and unclear. This ambiguity begs the issue of how such a notion may be used to overthrow unfair institutions without

⁵⁰ Thomas, Caste Discrimination among Christians: Case Study 3, interview by Pinaki Burman, Live (One-on-One), 12 January 2025.

⁵¹ John Philip Sele and Cynthia Wanjiku, 'Theology of Development: Addressing Poverty and Inequality in Nigeria and Kenya,' *Greener Journal of Social Sciences* 14 (12 October 2024): 156–65, <https://doi.org/10.15580/gjss.2024.2.093024123>.

⁵² John Klaasen, 'Practical Theology and Social Just Pedagogies as Decoloniality Space,' *Religions* 14, no. 5 (May 2023): 675, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14050675>.

⁵³ 'Nyambura Njoroge,' in *Wikipedia*, 27 August 2024, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Nyambura_Njoroge&oldid=1242575756#Career.

⁵⁴ Heath Greville et al., 'Addressing Complex Social Problems Using the Lens of Family Violence: Valuable Learning from the First Year of an Interdisciplinary Community of Practice,' *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 20, no. 4 (January 2023): 3501, <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20043501>.

⁵⁵ 'The Importance of Interdisciplinary Collaboration in Social Work,' *Virginia Commonwealth University* (blog), 29 June 2022, https://onlinesocialwork.vcu.edu/blog/social-work-interdisciplinary-collaboration/?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

creating further ambiguity or abuse. The difficulty is in expressing clear knowledge that may direct morally righteous and practical behaviour.

According to certain readings, Benjamin's critique is overly extreme since it focuses on dismantling current structures without offering a clear plan for their replacement. As Larsen put it, it is a "political demand for a revolution." The article highlights the use of extra-legal violence to contest and overthrow current legal systems.⁵⁶ Comparably, Stuart emphasizes Benjamin's transition to "proto-Marxist and revolutionary political radicalism," implying that his essay is evidence of this revolutionary methodology.⁵⁷ According to this viewpoint, although his research successfully points out systemic problems, it provides no advice on how to create fair systems after dismantling. To address this issue, Benjamin's observations must be combined with practical tactics that consider and carry out just alternatives. Notwithstanding these criticisms, Benjamin's theories have significantly impacted critical theory, liberation theology, and current discussions of justice. His investigation of the connections between justice, violence, and the law offers academics and activists a critical perspective for analyzing and opposing repressive structures. This motivation emphasizes how his work is still relevant today in the pursuit of revolutionary social transformation. While issues remain in interpretation and implementation, the essay's contributions continue to motivate critical thinking and action for addressing structural inequalities.

Opportunities

Integrating theology with advocacy and other Humanities fields offers an array of benefits, including raising the theological discourse's relevance, bridging the gap between scholarly research and grassroots movements, and using Walter Benjamin's criticisms to generate creative frameworks for faith-based social action. According to Chesebro, Christian theology and social science integration tackles difficult problems in the church and suggests that such cooperation might result in more relevant and successful practices of faith.⁵⁸ Scholars may explore more about how early religious teachings affect social systems and human development by combining empirical findings with biblical and theological research. Theological studies are enhanced by this interdisciplinary approach, which also makes them more relevant to modern social circumstances.

Deep thoughts for rethinking faith-based social action may be found in Walter Benjamin's critical theories. His exploration of the relationships among religion, art, and society questions established assumptions and promotes revolutionary actions. Religious communities may create creative frameworks that address systematic inequalities by critically examining Benjamin's theories. According to Britt, Benjamin's religious sensitivity allowed him to identify and analyze the political risks of his day, implying that current faith-based projects might use his insights to address present social problems.⁵⁹ Finally, for a comprehensive approach to justice, the partnership between grassroots activity and scholarly theology is essential. Working together with community organizers, theologians, and social scientists may make sure that academic research influences real-world initiatives and vice versa. The creation of tactics that are both theoretically solid and practically sound is made easier by this synergy. For example, it has been demonstrated that combining theological inquiry with progressive action results in fresh perspectives on politics and faith, enhancing both scholarly discussions and grassroots initiatives for social change.⁶⁰

CONCLUSION

The groundbreaking paradigm for approaching systemic injustices through interdisciplinary and religiously informed approaches is provided by fusing Walter Benjamin's critical insights with practical theology. Benjamin's writings offer significant insights for rethinking social systems and motivating workable remedies, especially his examination of the interaction between theological concepts and modern reality. In his critique of modernity, Benjamin highlights the need to remove repressive structures to bring about true social change. His examination of the "interplay between contemporary reality and theological concepts" calls into question conventional notions and calls for a reassessment of the systems of power that currently exist and dominate. Considering that inequality must be addressed instantaneously, interdisciplinary cooperation is essential. Interdisciplinary research, for example, has played a crucial role in the fight against prejudice and discrimination, emphasizing the value of combining several academic disciplines to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.⁶¹ In summary, a powerful approach to resolving structural injustices is provided by combining practical theology and Walter Benjamin's critical perspectives. It is impossible to overestimate the significance of this undertaking since creating comprehensive and successful answers requires interdisciplinary and faith-informed methods. By studying Benjamin's work, academics and professionals can address oppressive structures and help build a society that is more equitable and inclusive.

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⁵⁶ Signe Larsen, 'Notes on the Thought of Walter Benjamin: Critique of Violence,' Critical Legal Thinking, 11 October 2013, <https://criticallegalthinking.com/2013/10/11/notes-thought-walter-benjamin-critique-violence/>.

⁵⁷ Duncan Stuart, 'Walter Benjamin's "Critique of Violence" Is a Revolutionary Call to Arms,' Jacobin, accessed 17 February 2025, <https://jacobin.com/2021/08/walter-benjamin-critique-of-violence-revolution-working-class-kapp-putsch>.

⁵⁸ Scott Chesebro, 'Integrating the Social Sciences and the Church: A Critique,' *Direction*, January 1978, 18–25.

⁵⁹ Brian Britt, 'Walter Benjamin's Religious Landscape,' *The Montreal Review*, January 2023.

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⁶¹ Anupama Dathan and Isabela Salgado, 'Using Interdisciplinary Research to Combat Bias and Discrimination,' *The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL)* (blog), 3 December 2021, https://www.povertyactionlab.org/blog/12-3-21/using-interdisciplinary-research-combat-bias-and-discrimination?utm_source.

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- [49] 'Weak Messianic Power Is a Concept Introduced by Walter Benjamin in His Theses on the Philosophy of History. It Alludes to Each Generation's Modest yet Powerful Ability to Identify Past Injustices and Implement Minor Yet Impactful Changes to Address Them. Weak Messianic Power Functions by Taking Little Steps That Break Oppressive Patterns and Create Opportunities for Redemption, as Opposed to a Powerful, Transformative Movement That Seeks to Topple the Status Quo. Without Asserting Final Triumph or Closure, It Highlights the Moral Obligation to Remember the Suffering of the Past and React with Acts of Justice, So Supporting the Continuous Process of Historical Redemption.' n.d.
- [50] Zizek, Slavoj. *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*. First Edition. Picador, 2008.