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INDIA Groundbreaking photography exhibition on India's Dalits opens today

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) is pleased to announce the official opening today of *Being Untouchable*, a groundbreaking new photography exhibition by Marcus Perkins, that focuses on the different forms of untouchability faced by Dalits in modern India.

Being Untouchable presents a rare and intimate series of portraits of the lives of Indian Dalits (formerly known as "untouchables"), and will be open to the public until 23 October at HOST Gallery, London.

Tonight's private viewing and press preview event will be addressed by two highly-regarded campaigners against casteism who bring unique experience of using the arts as a vehicle of protest against caste, Meena Kandasamy and S. Anand.

Meena Kandasamy is a poet, writer, activist and translator. Her debut poetry collection, *Touch*, was published in 2006 to widespread critical acclaim. A second collection, *Ms. Militancy*, will be published later this year.

S. Anand is an award-winning publisher and journalist who runs the imprint Navayana, the only publishing house in India that focuses exclusively on caste from an anti-caste perspective.

Photographer Marcus Perkins has covered documentary, corporate and commercial photography assignments in over 90 countries, and is best known for his work on humanitarian and human rights issues.

Marcus said of *Being Untouchable*, "Although myriad exhibitions in the UK have sought to illustrate almost every aspect of life in India, very few have ever paid serious attention to the issue of casteism. Despite the huge numbers affected, I'm convinced many outside India either don't know about casteism, or think it is just dying out as a result of India's economic boom – which clearly is not the case."

CSW's South Asia Team Leader David Griffiths said, "This exhibition is presented as a deep tribute to the people of whose portraits it is comprised. Their dignity, grace and courage belie the injustices which have been meted out to them as victims of India's pervasive caste hierarchy. Marcus' work powerfully echoes the voices of dissent and the aspirations for equality among tens of millions of Dalits. In our preoccupation with the extraordinary rise of middle-class India, we must not allow these voices to be drowned out."

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Meena Kandasamy and S. Anand will address today's press viewing at 5:30pm and will also be available for interview. Contact the press office for details.
2. Further press releases relating to the exhibition can be found at www.csw.org.uk
3. Marcus Perkins (<http://www.marcusperkins.co.uk>) has covered documentary, corporate and commercial photography assignments in over 90 countries, and is best known for his work on humanitarian and human rights issues.
4. For more information on Meena Kandasamy, visit meenu.wordpress.com.
5. For more information on S. Anand and Navayana publishing, visit navayana.org.

6. HOST Gallery (<http://www.foto8.com/new/on-display/host-exhibitions>) is at 1-5 Honduras Street, London EC1Y 0TH, near Barbican, Moorgate and Old Street tube stations. It is open 10am-6pm Monday to Friday, and 11am-4pm Saturday.