



# UJAMAA NEWS

## Introduction

The second semester just started and so did the work at the Ujamaa Centre. We welcomed a delegation of students from the United States and a group of Church leaders from Nigeria, they will be with us for the next couple of weeks. You will find more about their program and the purpose of their visit in this issue.

Furthermore we would like to share with you some of the Contextual Bible Studies (CBS) done by our African Research Associates across Southern Africa. As we are looking back on the work we have done in the past, it is 10 years after the launch of the Tamar Campaign in Kenya, it is also good to mention that we are currently undergoing an external evaluation. It is exciting to listen to the people in the communities that have been working with us over the past years and hear how Ujamaa accompanied them in their journey towards development. We hope to learn from the evaluation, that it gives us a input and strength to continue the work.

## External Evaluation and the Theory of Change

At present we are being evaluated by the Msunduzi Evaluation Consortium. On Friday 10th July the management team was invited to sit together and participate in a 'Theory of Change' workshop. We reflected on our core business and we had to come up with all the activities that Ujamaa has been doing under the five different Theologies. The activities (the yellow papers in the photo) and what those activities try to change (the orange papers in the photo). We were not allowed to use any resources, everything had to come up out of our minds. Throughout the workshop we had to rethink about our main goal, was there something missing, should we add something? It was a very informative day, we are looking forward to the outcomes of this evaluation!



*Photo's of the workshop*

## UJAMAA CENTRE

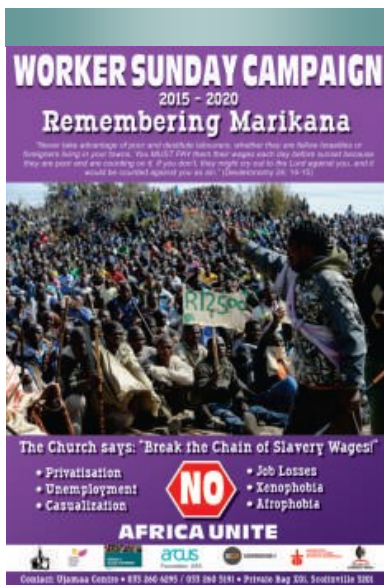
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## Worker Sunday liturgy

**THEME:** Preferably on issues relating to casual labour and unemployment

**TEXTS:** Choose a relevant text or texts from the pamphlets (see website under campaigns)

**TESTIMONIES:** A space for the unemployed, workers to share their stories of work

**MESSAGES:** Messages of support from churches, ecumenical organizations, labour, business, and government labour department or any representative

**SONGS:** Revolutionary songs of struggle to support the unemployed and workers in challenging an oppressive economic and political system

**DRESS:** Workers and the unemployed wear their preferred work regalia in show of solidarity with each other

**PRAYERS:** Intercession prayers to be done by different people and organizations

(Taken from the Worker Sunday pamphlet, written by Sithembiso Zwane)

# Worker Sunday Campaign

**By Sithembiso Zwane** During the days of Apartheid, when black working class workers were terribly exploited, dehumanized and oppressed, the church wanted to give support to those who were disregarded, those who were at the periphery of society – namely the working class.

The fundamental challenge that faced the church then was to publicly articulate its social teaching; it did this by promoting justice in the workplace through the Worker Sunday Campaigns that mobilized interdenominational services aimed at showing solidarity with the unemployed. Emphasis during the services was placed on the Biblical message of justice, and that God in the Bible is portrayed as a Worker. As part of the campaign process; posters and pamphlets were distributed to local churches to be displayed or handed out to people. Sermon outlines, scriptures and revolutionary songs were sent to pastors and ecumenical partner organizations working in the area of economic and social justice in preparation for Worker Sunday Campaign services.

Since 1979 the Worker Sunday message focused primarily on the working conditions and worker rights, this changed after 1994 with the introduction of a progressive Constitution and Labour Laws protecting workers from exploitation. However, 21 years into our democracy, the very progressive Labour Laws are being under-

mined by the Owners of the Means of Production, as was evident in the Marikana Massacre on the 16 August 2012, when the bosses on London Mining (LonMin) rejected the workers proposed increase of R 12,500 a month after the longest protracted industrial action in the history of labour in South Africa. These were the poorest labours in the Mining Sector struggling to earn a 'living wage' in the midst of opulence by their capitalist bosses at LonMin. This was an economic injustice.

The Worker Sunday Campaign is an attempt to say, the Church support the Workers Struggle for a 'LIVING WAGE', "Never take advantage of the poor and destitute labours, whether they are fellow Israelites or foreigners living in your towns. You must pay them their wages each day before sunset because they are poor and are counting on it. If you don't, they might cry out to the Lord against you and it would be counted against you as sin" (Deut.24:14-15).

In our training workshops we make reference to two concepts: 'The unemployed' and the 'The workers.' Those who are 'the unemployed' are not inactive creatures waiting for paid employment, but are actively involved in various voluntary projects in their respective communities and churches. We therefore refer to them as 'the workers' because they are at work, but not paid work.



Simangaliso Kumalo and Sithembiso Zwane showing the Worker Sunday Posters





## The launch of the Worker Sunday Campaign

On May 28th the launch of the Worker Sunday Campaign took place in KwaNxamalala, one of the communities where we work together with a group of unemployed youth. Organized mainly by the youth of the community, in collaboration with the Ujamaa Centre, the day was a success.

The speakers came from the leading political party in the community, the worker union, church leaders and unemployed youth. They all addressed the issues of work, wages and unemployment. Over 150 people attended the launch, coming from different communities around Pietermaritzburg.



*Some impressions taken during the launch of the campaign*

## Word from the Director

Dear friends,

It is exciting to present to you the second copy of The UJAMAA NEWS. Ujamaa continues with its life-transforming work in our communities in the Southern African region. In July Ujamaa made an emotional farewell to Ms Elisa Schröder, a PhD student from Brazil. Ms Schröder was here to learn about the CBS method and to participate in our work. It was a joy to have Elisa with us and we wish her success in both her studies and work in Brazil.

In this issue you will learn about CBS, worker Sunday campaigns and lectures that have been organized and facilitated with great success in different communities. For instance you will read about the CBS events that were held in Namibia and Zambia. You will also learn about the launch of the Worker Sunday Campaign which was launched in May under the auspices of the Bread Theology Programme to highlight the plight of workers who continue to be exploited by being paid meagre wages, some are maimed and killed like the 44 killed in Marikana during the strike in the platinum mines. At an event held at KwaNxamalala near Pietermaritzburg attended by workers, youth, religious leaders, Ujamaa encouraged theological reflections on issues around the experiences of workers and the challenge to create wealth that will benefit all people especially the poorest members of society. Again the use of the Bible through CBS's as a tool for liberation and transformation was highlighted. We also celebrate the hosting of the 1st Isaiah Shembe Lecture at the University which was host under the auspices of our People's Theology Programme, aimed at reflecting on the theologies from the underside. You will also learn about the lecture on Bantuness delivered by Dr Willy Mafuta as a response to the xenophobic attacks. The lecture highlighted the need to celebrate Bantuness without being discriminatory and xenophobic to other people. I would like to recommend this newsletter to you as our effort to share our exciting work with our partners and friends.

Simangaliso Kumalo

## Namibia: CBS on Redemptive Masculinities

**By Indileni Hilukiluah.** Two Contextual Bible Studies (CBS) from the Ujamaa Redemptive Masculinities series were conducted with the St. Michael's Anglican Church Bible Study Group, Katutura, Windhoek, Namibia on the 10th and 17th of June 2015. Issues around masculinities and how they are appropriated in modern day Namibia by African Christians in light of gender based violence (GBV), economic, cultural and socio-political changes have varying implications on how men feel and live out their lives within society. The themes, 'Jesus the Man' using Mark 5: 21-6:1 and 'Men Wanting Power, Men Wanting Healing' using Matthew 20:17-33 brought to light that the concept of masculinity needs to be further understood, explored, and studied especially in local languages.



*The group in Namibia*

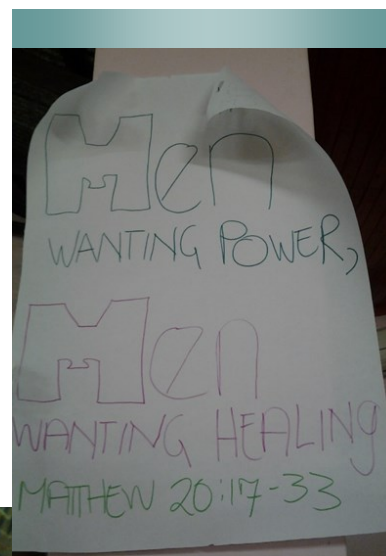
## The bleeding woman: Reading Mark 5: 25-42 with women with bleeding hearts

**Contextual Bible Study by Rose Nyirimana.** These Contextual Bible Studies are conducted with women immigrants from the African Great Lake Region who live in South Africa, in the City of Durban. Many of the women are living with wounds and trauma resulting from conflicts which led to war and genocide in their countries. The recent series of Bible Studies in May and June were conducted with the aim of healing and reconciliation. The reading of the story of Jesus and the woman with the issue of blood in Mark 5: 25-42, recognized by the bleeding hearts of these women, changed their emotional situation. Like the woman in the text who touched Jesus secretly and did not

dare telling her story openly, some of these women also are living with such wounds as they cannot tell their stories for fear of stereotyping. The Contextual Bible Studies provide space for them to speak which is one of the major tools for their healing process.



*Photo taken during a CBS workshop in Durban*



### African Research Associates

Over the years Ujamaa has been receiving calls from our Advisory Board, partners and ecumenical bodies to extend its work to other African countries. Although we have been working in these countries when invited, we had not developed a clear focused strategy to do this work. As part of the new strategy we have decided to appoint former students of UKZN who are in a few African countries to represent Ujamaa. These are referred to as Africa Research Associates, (ARAs).

Again the aim is that they will connect themselves with the national council of churches in their country through which they will implement all the programs of Ujamaa.

They conduct workshops and Bible Studies on the five themes of Ujamaa in their countries and then they will submit a detailed report for the benefit of our organization, funders and for research.

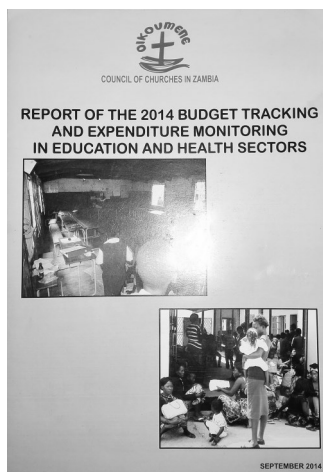


## Contextual Bible Studies in Zambia

By **Kangwa Mabuluki**. The Ujamaa programs in Zambia are this year focused in the area of “Public Theology.” The general goal of activities in public theology is “To equip religious leaders and church members (Clergy, Women, and Youth) in local communities on the interface between faith and politics for effective participation in the development of democracy and good governance”. Four Contextual Bible Studies are planned in the next four months focusing on “Good Governance and Accountability”. The CBS will be on “Voter education”, and on “public stewardship through budget monitoring”. The CBS will be conducted with the Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ) member churches. The Ujamaa Research Associate has

spent most part of the first half of the year preparing the Bible studies, and arranging with the CCZ where and when the CBS will be conducted. Among the resources available to the churches to help them with the Bible studies and follow up, especially in the area of “public stewardship through budget monitoring” are reports produced by CCZ on “National Budget tracking and expenditure monitoring”.

The focus on Public Theology for Zambia is a shift from “Body Theology” which has been the focus since CBS was introduced to Zambia in 2004. Among the expected outcomes of the Contextual Bible Studies is a rise in percentage of voter registration, and an increase in the number of church leaders and members able to articulate importance of participating in national elections.



*One of the resources that will be used by the participants in Zambia.*

## Mozambique, HIV AIDS together with World Vision

By **Elisa Schroder** The Ujamaa workshop in Mozambique took place from May 5th to the 7th, 2015. The workshop was organized in partnership with World Vision. We were invited to visit the Changoene community in Xai - Xai, to conduct a series of Contextual Bible Studies.

Oppression and violence against women is often present in a patriarchal society and many times seen as normal and understood as acceptable and part of the culture. The focus of the workshop was reflecting upon the empowerment of women and girls. We worked three days with the same group of women and girls, leaders from the community (almost 60 participants) using bible texts to reflect about the local situation. The group was very open and accepted us very well. The division into smaller groups was related to the ages.

The text we used were: John 4: 1-42 and Ruth 1-4. On the third day I meet with a group of people living with HIV and Aids from the community (10 participants) and we used Mark 5: 5-34. Some quotes from the workshop:

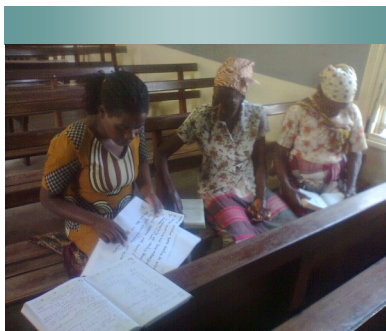
“The woman from the text is like us. She spend all the money to find a cure, but she did not get better. So happened with us. We went after everything until we

## Workshop on Masculinity in the Context of HIV

From May 11th to the 14th, the Ujamaa center was invited to attend a Workshop about Masculinity and LGBTI in the Context of HIV organized by ‘Brot fur die Welt’ with partner organizations in Southern Africa and Asia. Dr. Lilian Siwila, researcher for Body Theology and professor in Gender studies at UKZN, went to represent Ujamaa. For most of the participants, this was their first experience with the method of Contextual Bible Studies as developed by Ujamaa and they got excited. It was not intended to focus on the CBS method however Dr. Siwila was asked to show the Ujamaa website and where to find the manual. We hope that this workshop will contribute to our network of partners and associates doing CBS in Southern Africa and beyond.



*Photo from Mozambique workshop*



*Photo from Mozambique workshop*

### **Other bible studies that took place during the last months**

There were workshops held in Johannesburg, to encourage dialogues for violent behavior against refugees and promote social cohesion.

In Umlazi D, Durban there were Contextual Bible Studies on Social Movements and Community Building.



*Bongi Zengele speaks about Tamar at the beginning of a mini conference for Methodist women.*

### **Welcoming Rev Israel Mkhize as ARA**



It is a joy for us at Ujamaa to welcome Rev Israel Mkhize as an

ARA. Rev Mkhize currently works as an independent political analyst. His work has appeared on different television programmes, radio and newspapers. He is recognized as an emerging significant political voice in South Africa. His unique contribution is that his analysis are from a theo-political perspective.

## **The power of CBS in Ricatla: reading 2 Kings 2:1-16 in the context of Land Dispossession**

By **Helder Luis Carlos** Ricatla is a small and rural area in Maputo province, in Mozambique. Land dispossession is an issue among the natives. The area is attracting many people from different parts of the country, especially from Maputo city. This attraction is due to its location in a commercial place; every year companies and/or business people go there in order to expose and sell their goods. This has led to economic development of the area. However, this economic development has led people to lose their land, where they used to grow their own crops for their sustainability and bury their relatives when die. This scenario has led us to conduct a Contextual Bible study on Land dispossession.

The key biblical text in the two days of CBS (17 and 18 April 2015) was 2 Kings 21:1-16. There were 13 participants (11 women and 2 men). The participants took much time reflecting on the way Naboth was killed by the royal family. For them, this way of killing a man in order to take his property (land) is so brutal and cannot be done by a normal human being. One other issue that called our attention is the fact that the royal woman (Jezabel) is described in the text as someone who planned the crime therefore some of the participants described her as a bad creature. This idea was also given by other women. For these participants, women must pray for God so that their sins will be forgiven. This was so shocking for us but we did understand the reality of these people; they are educated in a context where women are associated with bad issues. In fact, in different places of the country (including Ricatla), women are not treated with care because all the bad things come from them while what good is comes from men. In other ways, the sins of men are carried by women. This discussion has led us to intervene in order to minimize this dehumanization of women in the group and other women who were not there. Our voice of command was: the crime was planned and executed by the royal family and not by the Queen alone; the crime could not be executed if Ahab did not want it. So, there is no need to clean the male character and make dirty the female character.

When we brought the text to the reality of the people it was easy for them to articulate and connect it to what happens every day in their

families. In fact, the participants were able to say that "the story of Naboth is not only a biblical story, but our story". They identify themselves with Naboth and there are many Ahabs and Jezabels in their communities. There are many people taking the lands of others. For them, some of the Ahabs come and deceive them with little money asking them to buy the land and innocently they sell it cheaply. Others come in the name of the State and take people's land giving them nothing or poor land with little space. It was interesting to hear one of the participants arguing that "it does not matter the way we lose our lands, but what is clear is that people are becoming poorer every day and there is no place where we can grow our own food". In fact, there are many people hanging around everyday, doing nothing, especially the youth. It was so unexpected that during the discussion the issue of xenophobia came into discussion. One of the participants (a woman) said that "we are now in danger, we have lost our land and our sons cannot go to South Africa because if they go there the South Africans will kill them. There is no way we can survive, we will die". This statement has led the group into a deep discussion, linking Xenophobia to land dispossession. This discussion did not surprise us because the CBS took place when many people were coming back from South Africa because of Xenophobia.

So, it is clear that this CBS has changed the way of thinking of the participants, because at the end many of them (especially those who cheaply had sold their land) said: we must not sell again our land and we must teach others not to sell it. In our opinion, this statement shows clearly that CBS has power and can be used to empower people in order for them to reclaim their humanization.



*Photo taken during one of the bible studies.*



## Reclamation of the Social Construction of "Bantuness"

On May 12th 2015, Dr. Willy Mafuta was invited by the Ujamaa Centre to speak about the politics of identity and Xenophobia in South Africa. The talk was centered on the connotation and understanding of the word "Bantuness" and its implication within post-colonial South Africa. Mafuta started by putting things within the historical perspective of the construction of the South African collective identity. He recommended the need "to de-apartheid" the mind and to re-appropriate



*The public interacts with the speaker.*

"Bantuness" and acknowledge it as normative. He dismissed the idea of reclaiming or re-appropriating 'Bantu' on the grounds of common humanity (we are all humans) or on the grounds of "Africaness" (we are all Africans), and not even on the grounds of Ubuntu. He noted that much as all these have value, the need to re-appropriate Bantuness on the grounds of what he called "Philia-delphos" - brotherhood or brotherness" is critical.

The full script of his lecture is to be found on [our website](#)

## Shembe lecture

The Ujamaa Centre for Community Development and Research in the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics (SRPC) in partnership with the Nazareth Baptist Church (Ebuhleni) organized the inaugural Prophet Isaiah Shembe Public Lecture. The Prophet Isaiah Shembe lecture is a 'new project' within People's Theology Programme of the Ujamaa Centre. It is an attempt to provide 'space' for previously marginalized voices within the social, cultural and religious discourse to critically engage with the dominant narrative.

"The focus of this presentation is a particular text, the Bible, and its place in Isaiah Shembe's restoration of African community in the aftermath of colonial conquest and missionary colonial-kholwa Christianity ." The script of the lecture will be found on our website ([here](#)).



*Photos from the Shembe inaugural public lecture.*

*Dr. Willy Mafuta*



## Visiting the Ujamaa Centre

Last week five Nigerian Church leaders and six American Students were welcomed by the Ujamaa Centre to participate in the PrTh290 module.

## PrTh290

PrTh290 (Practical Theology) is a module offered at UKZN.

This introductory course provides an overview of the history, methodology and praxis of liberation theology articulated by Ujamaa Centre for Community Development and Research community programs. The purpose of this course is to introduce participants to Ujamaa Centre's methodology and theories of social justice across its programs particularly the relationship between human Sexuality and Religion articulated through the Body Theology program.

The course is driven by questions of religion and human sexuality. Does the 'Bible say' anything about homosexuality? Did homosexuality exist in Africa? Is homosexuality an 'illness' that needs to be 'cured' or is it a 'sexual preference'/or orientation?

The course is divided into 9 class sessions and focused dialogues outside class with a wide range of stakeholders, namely academics, religious leaders, traditional leaders and community activists.

(Taken from the course outline, written by Sithembiso Zwane)

## UJAMAA CENTRE

The Ujamaa Centre was initiated in 1985 as part of the School of Theology at the then University of Natal (currently known as UKZN). It is a non-partisan, non-denominational, Centre for Community Development and Research which supports capacity building on development, good governance on church and civil society levels through theological education to ensure rigorous participation of all citizens in social transformation.

The Ujamaa Centre is the ideological-theological product of various strands of liberation theology, particularly South African Black Theology and South African Contextual Theology. More specifically, the Ujamaa Centre is committed to working with communities of the poor, the working-class, and the marginalized, using the biblical and theological resources for social and individual transformation.

At the heart of the Ujamaa Centre is the concept and practice of praxis. Praxis involves an ongoing commitment to the cycle-spiral of action-and-reflection. This is central to our work. It is praxis that has enabled the Ujamaa Centre to respond to the ongoing and changing realities of South African and Southern African context. We try to respond faithfully to our context, using biblical and theological resources, and then we carefully (and formally) reflect on what we have done and how we have done it. It is praxis that keep us connected both to the community and the academy.

## Upcoming events

### Academic projects:

#### Public Lectures:

1. Gunther Wittenburg Lecture: 13 August 2015
2. Allan Boesak Lecture: 25 August 2015
3. Mzwandile R Nunes Lecture: 29 October 2015

(22-30 October 2015 Mzwandile R Nunes Memorial Week)

#### Other:

Victim-Offender Dialogue (VOD) success story [see website](#), October

### Community Projects:

1. LGBTI Project with Religious and Traditional Leaders: July-November 2015

### SADC Regional Work

1. LGBTI in Namibia
2. Women, HIV and LGBTI in Botswana
3. Economic Justice in Mozambique
4. Church and State in Zambia
5. Religion and Politics in Swaziland



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