

WHAT IS THE WORKER SUNDAY?

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 inter-denominational 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 undermined 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 labourers 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'

The Church Says, 'Break the Chains of Slavery Wages:

“Never take advantage of the poor and destitute labourers, 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).

WORKER CONSCIOUSNESS

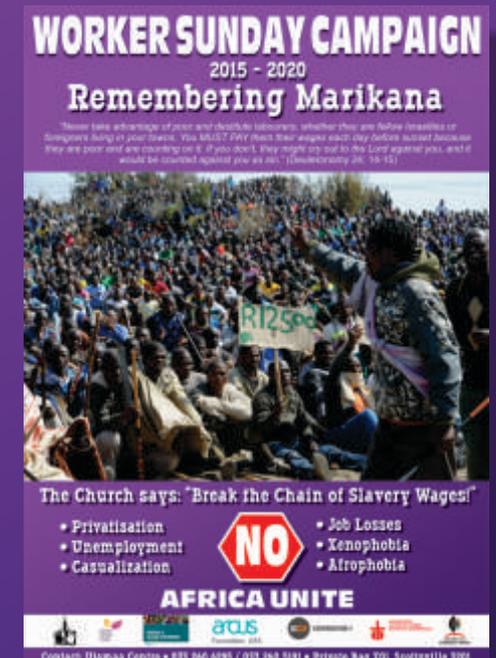
In our training workshops we make reference to two concepts: 'The unemployed' and the 'The workers.' Those who are 'the unemployed' are not inactive creatures waiting for paid employment, but are actively involved in various voluntary projects in their respective communities and churches. We therefore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

OBJECTIVES

- To show the unequivocal support to both the unemployed and the workers struggles of work
- To provide biblical and theological resources to challenge dominant economic and political paradigms in the public realm
- To lobby churches, trade unions, business and community to support the unemployed and the workers in their struggle for a 'LIVING WAGE'

VISION

- To advocate for an alternative economic and political system that it characterized by the values of the Kingdom of God based on equitable sharing of resources that will ultimately bring about social transformation.



BIBLICAL TEXTS

Lev 19: 13

“Do not defraud or rob your neighbor; do not make your hired workers wait until the next day to receive their pay”

Mal 3: 5c

“I will speak against those who cheat employees of their wages, who oppress widows and orphans, or who deprive the foreigners living among you of justice, for these people do not fear me” Says the Lord of Heaven's Armies.”

James 5: 4

“For listen! Hear the cries of the field workers whom you have cheated on their pay. The wages you have held back cry out against you. The cries of those who harvest your fields have reached the ears of the Lord of Heaven's Armies.”

WORKER SUNDAY SPECIAL LITURGY

- **THEME:** Preferably on issues relating to casual labour and unemployment
- **TEXTS:** Choose a relevant text or texts from the pamphlets
- **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



SOLIDARITY FOREVER

When the Movement's inspiration through the workers blood shall run,
There can be no power greater anywhere beneath the sun,
Yet what force on earth is weaker than the feeble strength of one?
But the Movement makes us strong. CHORUS

CHORUS

Solidarity forever, Solidarity forever
Solidarity forever
For the Movement makes us strong

It was we who ploughed the fields, built the cities where they trade.
Dug the mines and built the workshops, endless miles or railroad laid,
Now we stand outcast and starving midst the wonders we have made.
But the Movement makes us strong. CHORUS

They have taken untold millions that they never toiled to earn,
But without our brain and muscle not a single wheel can turn,
We can break their haughty power; gain our freedom when we learn,
That the Movement makes us strong. CHORUS

In our hands is placed a power greater than their hoarded gold,

Greater than the might of atoms magnified a thousand fold,
We can bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old,
For the Movement makes us strong. CHORUS

WE SING TO THE WORKERS VIVE L'AMOUR

Let every good worker now join in our song
Vive la compagne
Success to each other and pass it along,
Vive la compagne Oh.....CHORUS

Vive la vive la, vive lamour
Vive la vive la, vive lamour
Vive la vive la, vive lamour
Vive la compagne

With friends all around us we'll sing out our song
Vive la compagne
We 'll conquer our troubles, it won't take us long,
Vive la compagne OhCHORUS

A friend on the left and a friend on the right,
Vive la compagne
In love and good fellowship let us unite,
Vive la compagne Oh.....CHORUS

Now wider and wider our circle expands
Vive la compagne
We sing to the workers all over the land,
Vive la compagne Oh.....CHORUS

