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Article: Sharing His shame outside the stadium through Esixekweni: How can churches be involved?

Every year churches are asked to hold services primarily during the month of May in solidarity with the working poor and the unemployed. This campaign started in the days of apartheid, when black people were exploited and oppressed. The campaign was used by the churches as a means to show support to the working class and poor people such as farm workers, domestic workers, mine workers, etc. Resources were produced to enable the different denominations and organisations to advance Biblical and theological teachings that promote justice in the workplace. This year the campaign is dedicated to those that suffer alienation, marginalisation and are at risk of social ills such as human trafficking due to the hosting of the World Cup.

The manner in which this World Cup has been organised clearly shows that this event has been hijacked to become an elitist project that has created wealth for a few. While billions of rands have been spent in building roads, stadia and renovating different recreational facilities, the poorest of the poor have become victims of evictions. Informal traders, homeless people and informal dwellers, have been removed from the cities and the vicinity of stadia. Thousands of men and women have given their sweat and strength in the construction of facilities needed to host this event, and yet they are left without employment and nothing (monetarily) to show off their role and compensation in the process. The only people that will live to tell of the great fruits reaped from the hosting of this world event are those whose companies were appointed service providers during the tournament. It is the role of the church, to stand with the inflicted in their search for justice.

Esixekweni: useful in mobilising churches and ecumenical organisations

The churches are invited to show support to the marginalised and vulnerable groups during the 2010 FIFA World Cup and beyond by participating in Esixekweni services. These services will be in the form of street revivals and should involve the church fraternity and those affected. The street revivals are an opportunity for churches and ecumenical organizations to meet and experience God 'outside the stadia' with the marginalized and excluded. This is identification with Jesus and his ministry who identified with the poor, the down-trodden, the exploited and those denied justice. This is also a response to the call of Jesus in the book of Hebrews 13:13 "Let us, then, go to Him outside the camp and share His shame".

In organising the services, churches in the same locality are asked to identify one central venue where they will hold their street revival service. It is proposed that the order of the service, the songs and the sermon be used to show support and symbolize social effects of the World Cup on marginalized groups. We further suggest that representatives of the vulnerable groups such as women, children, car guards, informal traders, those living in informal settlements etc be invited to share their stories in the service. Speakers can also be invited. Services should end with a procession as a symbol of the churches' solidarity with those affected by the World Cup. It is advised that the people directly affected by the World Cup should lead the street revivals. The processions should have intervals where the affected can share shortly about their plight.

Show your Support!

Act now and show your support by engaging with fellow ministers in your neighbourhood to prepare for the street revivals. Write statements in support of these marginalised and vulnerable groups. Resource materials such as posters, pamphlets and liturgy are available to the participating churches.

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