

God, the Labourer, The Employer &
His Kingdom

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Matthew 20 vs. 1-7

In the calendar year of all the churches around the world we are approaching the period when as Christians & as churches we will celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. ¹⁾ It is important that we should never forget that Jesus was born as the son of a labourer, Joseph of Nazareth, the husband of Mary, was a carpenter - or rather a building contractor who in all probability assisted in building Herod's temple. ²⁾ It is also important to remember ourselves that Jesus was born in poverty, did not want to possess material goods and that he died penniless.

3) Another fact of importance which has to be emphasized here is that the Bible is full of references regarding labourers and the duties we as Christians have towards labourers as well as employers. In this regard there are especially 3 aspects which we have to keep in mind:

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① The Bible refers specifically to the duty of the labourer: that he has to work (Exodus 20), to fulfill his duty towards those who employ him

② The Bible also has a specific word to say regarding employers: their duty to pay the labourer his/her regular wage

③ The Bible also has a clear & definite word to Christians about those who are unable to work: the poor, the dispossessed, the widows & orphans, the cripple, the blind, the lame, the foreigners

④ The Bible also has a specific word to say about the relationship between rich and poor, i.e. about the whole issue of health & poverty

That is why the Church & the church, has a duty to ~~not~~ be interested in issues such as fair wages, employment and unemployment, economic systems & how they affect labourers, employees, property, etc.

- Alexander : $\pm 60\%$ unemployment of able bodied men & women

- Policy of apartheid which legally forced 3 1/2 mill African off their grounds when they tried to lease their lands : Magopu etc

- Labour unions like COSATU, business like Afr. Ch. of Comm., Anglo-Am. ac. Ben. etc)

- Christians & the Church have a special role
 to play, a duty to fulfil regarding the
attitudes of labourers & employers. ~~The~~ Historians
 (also our own S.A. historians) has taught
 - lack of justice
 - as that even though we may have the
 most marvellous labour laws, rules &
 regulations in our new constitution,
 if there is a lack of love, ~~of justice~~
of mutual concern, of compassion
 (Afr. deems - megevoel) there will
 still steep be labour conflict, loss
 of income for labourers & employers
 (millions - strikes)