

the Bible Study Series of Church Land Programme

INTRODUCTORY NOTES



THE BIBLE STUDY Series of Church Land Programme (CLP) aims to assist local church leaders and congregations. The Series provides relevant and practical reflections on the themes of people's land rights and creation as a partnership with God.

Please read through these Introductory Notes before using any of the studies.

Background

CLP IS A SOUTH African non-governmental organisation that works with people, churches and land. It is committed to the improvement of the lives of people involved with land issues and/or with church owned land, paying particular attention to women and the poorest. It also works for the sustainable use of the land, so as to benefit future generations. Given the history of our country, CLP promotes a just and moral land and agrarian reform programme, helping the church and communities to critically reflect upon their relationships with each other and the land. This is important because the distribution of land to people in South Africa is unsustainable. Even though our democracy is more than twelve years on, land ownership and use are still structured according to a history of apartheid dispossession.

CLP encourages, challenges and enables churches (leaders and members) to become partners with communities in a new sense of ministry that promotes just and

sustainable agrarian reform, and the eradication of poverty.

CLP developed this Bible Study Series for its own use, for the use of church or community members, and also in response to a request from *Land Matters* (a project of the KwaZulu-Natal Christian Council and the KwaZulu-Natal Church Leaders' Group). *Land Matters* felt that there was a need to develop materials that could help people respond to the challenges related to land in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Each of the studies was developed in partnership with the Ujamaa Centre for Biblical and Theological Community Development and Research at the University of KwaZulu Natal, and have been tested and 'piloted' on a number of different church groups. As at the beginning of 2006 there are four studies in the Series, and the intention is that more will be added in the future.

Objectives

THE BIBLE STUDY Series aims to:

- Provide the church (both leaders and members) with broad values and commitments from the Bible when it comes to land issues (e.g. a commitment to the poor and social justice).
- Provide the church (both leaders and members) with appropriate Bible study materials which will help it to formulate an effective, strategic and proactive response to land issues in South Africa.
- Make participants of the studies

conscience of land issues, and in particular aware of how the Bible 'speaks' about land issues.

- Help participants of the studies discuss land issues within their community and within their church. It aims to provide a framework for participants to share their experiences and express their emotions when it comes to their relationship with the land.

It is hoped that if these aims are reached, it will result in the mobilisation of the Bible study participants. It is hoped that people and church groups will be confident to advocate and act for a more just and equitable use of the land within their communities.

How should this Series be Used?

RATHER THAN A 'curriculum', the studies in this Series are a starting place for a group of people who wish to grow in their understanding of and action for land issues. The following provide some implementation guidelines:

- Even though the Series has been designed and piloted in the KwaZulu-Natal Province of South Africa, it is not only for use in this province or country! If the contents of the Series are pertinent to your context, you are welcome to use them.
- Anyone is welcome to organise and facilitate these studies. They are not intended to be facilitated by ordained clergy (or ministers) alone.
- The studies may be used individually, or as a Series.
- The studies are written in English, but may also be done in isiZulu.
- The style of these studies is one of

participation and discussion. This means that they are compiled with the understanding that each and every participant has wisdom and a valid contribution to make – the 'answers' are not all with one person. When a study is done, it should not be undertaken as if in a school classroom, but rather like a round table discussion between equals.









- Since this is the way this study is done, your seating style should reflect this: it is important to put the chairs so that people are seated around in a circle (or semi-circle) facing each other, and not like school desks all facing the 'front'.
- Similarly the person organising the Bible Study is a *facilitator*, rather than a 'preacher'. This means that their role is to encourage others to participate and contribute at every step in the process, and not be the only one to speak.
- The questions used in the studies have no 'model answers'. The participants and facilitator are encouraged to read, think, discuss and explore both what the scriptural texts and their own experiences tell them.
- Doing these studies may evoke great emotion in participants. This is because land and relationship to the land is a painful and difficult thing for many. The facilitator will need to be ready for this and sensitive to the needs of participants. It may even be necessary to take a break at some point within the study.
- When the participants divide up into smaller groups, it may be a good idea to do this in a certain way: older women in one group, older men in another, younger women in one group and younger men in another. This is because people often feel unconfident to speak out in a group where people

different to themselves are present.

- Certain symbols are used repeatedly throughout the Series. Every time they are used, they mean the same thing. A key to help understand these symbols is on the next few pages.
- If you have made use of one or more of the studies within the Series, then CLP

would like to hear from you. We would like feedback: to hear how the study went, what resulted from it, and how it could be improved. If you would like to let CLP know, then you are welcome to complete the Assessment page at the end of these notes, and post it to CLP.

Key to the Symbols used in the Bible Study Series

	<p>This symbol refers to the <u>start</u> of a new study</p>
	<p>This picture of a clock gives the <u>estimated time</u> it should take to complete each study. This time is a guide only. Some study groups may take longer, and others may be quicker. The facilitator should avoid pushing too quickly through the study as the participants may miss out on its full meaning.</p>
	<p>The picture of an open book indicates the <u>key text</u>, or main reference (book, chapter and verses) from the Bible. The key text is the foundation for each study, and participants are encouraged to look at how the verses from the text relate to their own context.</p>
	<p>The picture of some <u>equipment and stationery</u> tells what will be needed to do each study. You will need to gather this before the study begins, and in some cases you will need to use it to prepare beforehand as well.</p>
	<p>The symbol of a hand making some notes tells what <u>preparation</u> is required by the facilitator before the study begins. Even though much of the content of each study needs to be contributed by the participants, the facilitator would benefit from having given some thought to the topic and the material ahead of the time.</p>
	<p>This picture symbolises the <u>reading aloud</u> of the key text. A good way to involve someone else in the study, is to ask them to do this reading. Be sure to choose someone who has a strong, loud voice, so that everyone can hear.</p>
	<p>The blocks which contain the <u>important information</u> sign are there to give the facilitator extra details. This may be some information which is not necessarily clear from the steps in the study, or it may be added facts about the key text or its context.</p>
	<p>The picture of a group of people around a table talking, means that the participants should divide into smaller groups and have a <u>discussion</u>. To discuss means that everyone has a chance to speak and a chance to listen carefully to what others are saying. The small groups may have to come up with their answers to some questions, or their plan of action for a way forward.</p>



The symbol of a tick, means that a good idea is offered to the facilitator. Whilst doing the good idea is not essential to complete the study, it will none-the-less add value to the overall gathering, and help the participants. It is up to the facilitator whether or not to do the good idea.



The sign of a question mark gives a definition for words or ideas which may be difficult to understand. These definitions are for both the facilitator and the participants.



This picture indicates the end of the Bible study. In each study a suggestion is made on how to finish up.

Assessment for Church Land Programme (CLP)

1. What is your name and telephone number?

2. Which town, city or community area are you from?

3. Which church group are you from?

4. Which Bible study/studies in the series did you use?

5. What circumstances in your community or church led you to use this one?

6. How many people (participants) joined you to do the Bible study?

7. Which part of the study did the participants find easy to do?

8. Which part of the study did the participants find difficult to do?

9. What were the main things that the participants learnt from the study?

10. What actions will the participants take, now that they have done the study?

11. What do you as the facilitator find helpful about the way the notes for the study are done?

12. What do you as the facilitator find difficult about the way the notes are done?

13. Which other studies are you planning to use?

14. What other Bible study topics on land would be useful to you, your church group, or your community.

Thank you for completing these questions. Please would you post or fax these pages to:

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