

Session 3

Biblical Principles for Land Discussion



JBC | JOHANNESBURG
Bible College

Biblical Principles for Land Discussion

Land in South Africa: Gift for All or Commodity for a Few?



JBC | JOHANNESBURG
Bible College

Church Land Project

Biblical Principles for Land

- Land is a gift from God, to be equitably shared for the benefit of all humanity
- Land is the 'locus of life', the place where life is lived and celebrated, the place that gives life and identity
- There is a critical social function of land. 'Ownership' of land is never absolute because this social function of land is paramount



Church Land Project

Biblical Principles for Land

- There is a critical social function of land. 'Ownership' of land is never absolute because this social function of land is paramount
- We must acknowledge the propensity for commodification, accumulation and profit, leading to the exclusion of the poor and the denial of their rights in land. Our interventions must be to work against this and ensure redress.



JBC | JOHANNESBURG
Bible College

Church Land Project

Biblical Principles for Land

- The Jubilee tradition affirms the redistributive nature of God's commitment to the poor, seeking to ensure just and equitable access to land and resources.
- Human work on the land should express the dignity of human labour and the joy of participation and co-operation because it is a privilege to be co-creators with God in the unfolding story of creation.



JBC | JOHANNESBURG
Bible College

Biblical Principles for Land
Discussion

Biblical Principles for Reform Policy



JBC | JOHANNESBURG
Bible College

Biblical Principles for Land

- It is immoral to reap the profits of another's wrong. Time passing does not justify the action



Biblical Principles for Land

- **There is a need to combine restitution with compensation.**



Biblical Principles for Land

- **Should not allow a wrong-doer to benefit from his wrong**



Biblical Principles for Land

- **Prioritize - legal, ordered, negotiated way forward**



Ovey Paper

Biblical Principles for Land

- It is immoral to reap the profits of another's wrong. Time passing does not justify the action
- There is a need to combine restitution with compensation.
- Should not allow a wrong-doer to benefit from his wrong
- Prioritize - legal, ordered, negotiated way forward



Other

Biblical Principles for Land

Solidarity

Christians are called to handle disputes in love, with a goal of restoration



JBC | JOHANNESBURG
Bible College

Other

Biblical Principles for Land

Doing Justice in a Just way



JBC | JOHANNESBURG
Bible College

Biblical Principles for Land Discussion

Article: "7 things Ramaphosa wants you to know about government's land reform plans"

Note: The 7 headings in this article are the journalist's, not the President's. Ramaphosa's actual words (in an article published by the Financial Times) are available online, e.g. at www.businesslive.co.za/bd/opinion/2018-08-24-exclusive-this-is-no-land-grab-writes-cyril-ramaphosa



JBC | JOHANNESBURG
Bible College

Land Reform Principles

1. There are no land grabs
 - “The ANC has been clear that its land reform programme should not undermine future investment in the economy or damage agricultural production and food security,”
 - The government has also explicitly stated that it would take action against anyone who breaks the country’s laws



Land Reform Principles

- 2. It's about strengthening all rights
- “The proposals will not erode property rights, but will instead ensure that the rights of all South Africans, and not just those who currently own land, are strengthened,” the president said.
- The goal is to make land accessible to those who work the land – and that those rights are also protected.



Land Reform Principles

3. This is not Zimbabwe 2.0

- South Africa has learnt from the experiences of other countries, and will not make the same mistakes that “other countries” have made.



Land Reform Principles

4. Changing the Constitution is for clarity

- “The proposed amendment would need to reinforce the fundamental principles of the property clause, which, among other things, prohibits the arbitrary deprivation of property and holds that expropriation is possible in the public interest subject to just and equitable compensation.



Land Reform Principles

5. Private land is not the target

- state-owned land – including that which is owned by SOEs – are first in line for redistribution.



Land Reform Principles

6. The plans are long-term

- land expropriation plans are long term, with government assisting and supporting those who are beneficiaries of the move.
- “It is essential that support is given to beneficiaries of land redistribution through financing, training, market access, irrigation and the provision of seeds, fertiliser and equipment, all of which contribute to the sustainability of emerging agricultural enterprises,”



Land Reform Principles

7. This is a moral and social imperative

- By equipping the majority, who were robbed of the opportunity to be productive, with the tools and support structures to become productive, the state is trying to develop more meaningful and inclusive growth in the country.



Land Reform Principles

7. This is a moral and social imperative

- Because of South Africa's past, where the majority were forced onto only 10% of the land under apartheid – and the incredibly delayed process of reparations over the last 25 years – the question of land reform is a moral, social and economic imperative



Land Reform Principles

1. There are no land grabs
2. It's about strengthening all rights
3. This is not Zimbabwe 2.0
4. Changing the Constitution is for clarity
5. Private land is not the target
6. The plans are long-term
7. This is a moral and social imperative

Note: The 7 headings in this article are the journalist's, not the President's. Ramaphosa's actual words (in an article published by the Financial Times) are available online, e.g. at www.businesslive.co.za/bd/opinion/2018-08-24-exclusive-this-is-no-land-grab-writes-cyril-ramaphosa



Biblical understanding of the
importance of land

Reflection and Discussion



JBC | JOHANNESBURG
Bible College

From Christian principles to Policy

Apply Universal principles to life today

1. Basic Christian Principles (identified from doctrines that permeate Scripture)
2. an assessment of relevant facts
3. Prudence



JBC | JOHANNESBURG
Bible College

From Christian principles to Policy

Apply Universal principles to life today

1. Basic Christian Principles (identified from doctrines that permeate Scripture)
2. an assessment of relevant facts
3. Prudence



JBC | JOHANNESBURG
Bible College

Biblical understanding of the
importance of land

Principle vs Policy



JBC | JOHANNESBURG
Bible College

Principles vs Policy

Principle

- general moral position which is applicable to a wide range of situations
- For Christians it represents God's perspective on that wide range of situations
- Derived from the Bible
- Generally Christians should agree at the level of principles. These are derived from the Bible



JBC | JOHANNESBURG
Bible College

Principles vs Policy

Apartheid

- Christians should be agreed on the principle that the racially based society to the advantage of the white minority was unfair and wrong in the eyes of God



JBC | JOHANNESBURG
Bible College

Principles vs Policy

Land Issue

- *the principle would be that there needs to be a fairer distribution of land across the population, that it should give people access and opportunity to work, and it should help provide as many people as possible with roots as well as with assets*



JBC | JOHANNESBURG
Bible College

Principles vs Policy

Policies

- *Means to an end*
- *about the mechanisms or government interventions to achieve the end*
- Christians can legitimately disagree about which means are most effective and appropriate
- They can disagree about timing and about priorities



Biblical understanding of the
importance of land

Reflection and Discussion



JBC | JOHANNESBURG
Bible College