

SINGING

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(Editorial note: I am given to understand that the provision for "SINGING" at the beginning and end of the Service was intended to follow the pattern of services at the Church of the Reconciliation in Taizé where meditative chants and songs are sung by the gathering and gathered congregation before the Offices. These "singings" contribute immeasurably to the worship. TGL)

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PRAYERS FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

by The Revd James Y Finlayson, MA, BD DipRED

published in

"An Unemployment Worship Book"

by The Sheffield Branch, Christians Unemployment Group.

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O Lord Jesus Christ,
You were anxious for those who stood idle in the market-place
when no one had hired them.
We plead before you the needs of the unemployed
whose plight is harder to endure than the hardest work,
whose hearts are made sick by hope deferred,

whose courage slackens under the strain of uncertainty,
whose faith is threatened by the cruelty of events.

Rescue the disheartened from despondency and despair;
quicken, for their sake, the social conscience of our people
in these urgent times.

Almighty God,
because it is your desire that we should live in unity,
remove all anxiety, prejudice, fear or hatred
that comes from differences of colour, race, speech, caste, class or creed
so that as one family we may offer our varied gifts and talents
to the common treasury,
none being deprived of the opportunity to serve the common weal because
work is denied them,
through Him who by wood and nails won the salvation of mankind,
even Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ,
when the doors were shut for fear,
you stood in the midst of your disciples in your risen power.
Show yourself now in comfort and hope to people without work through
no fault of theirs,
especially when enclosed in the own despair,
shutting out a society guilty of complacency, unconcern,
indifference or callousness.
Unlock the doors of their self-concern,
enlarge their horizon to stand with any who share the same plight
and enable them together to challenge the conscience of the powerful
with influence enough to create a just and compassionate order
amongst us all.

O God of many names, lover of all nations,
you do not set your seal upon the perpetual lordship of lords
nor on the unchanging servitude of servants.
Help those who exercise responsibility and enjoy power
to earn the respect of those under them,
those above them and those against them.
Dispose the hearts and minds of all in authority
to advance the good of all our citizens

that none may be denied the right to work;
through him who was the carpenter of Nazareth,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

"An Unemployment Worship Book"

Is offered by CHUG (Christians Unemployment Group) in the hope that it will:

provide insights into the experience of unemployment and its meaning,
stimulate prayer for those who are unemployed,
and for the attitudes and social and economic structures that
allow it to continue,
offer a range of material for wider use.

Included in it are: Dialogues, Prayers used on Unemployment Sundays in Sheffield, Vigil material, Litanies, An Order of Service of Thanksgiving observed after the closure of A Glassworks in 1988 with the loss of more than 300 jobs as a positive response to the situation, and Suggested Bible Readings around the theme of Employment, Unemployment, Healing, National and Social life.

A modestly produced booklet of some 48 pages obtainable from:

Maurice Snowdon,

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Totley Rise,

SHEFFIELD, S17 4DA (75p excluding postage)

provides some thoughtful

and much-needed material for devotional use.

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