

## Candle Prayer For Peace And Justice

There are a few wonderful lines in Psalm 101 where the psalmist speaks out profound words expressing the way Jesus love us to live;

“May I walk with integrity wherever I go

May I see you in all creation,

May I be a mirror of your love to all that I meet

May I reflect the freedom of your truth

and live as a beneficial presence in the world”

All over South Africa there are many, many good people, the vast majority of whom are seen by only the few that are the recipients of their goodness. Very occasionally something that starts small, inspired by these simple desires expressed by the psalmist, grows into something that makes really big waves and hits the international headlines. One such example is the fruits of something started back in 2005 by Sbu Zikondo of the shack-dweller’s movement, Abahlali baseMjondolo, that now boasts a membership of over 80 000 members. It has just been awarded a prestigious prize by the Swedish government for its doggedly determined work in the face of ongoing persecution from many angles and at times even the murder of some of its members.

And then there are the hundreds of thousands of other people who just get on with it, mirroring God’s love to all they meet, walking with integrity wherever they go. They reflect the freedom of God’s truth and act as a doing-good presence in the world. Someone or maybe a few started the community action networks at the start of the COVID pandemic, the vast majority of them getting no recognition. People provide shelter for the homeless, individuals in companies, big and small, start initiatives to address structural racism, sexism, unfair labour practices. People start food gardens just to provide free food to anyone who wants it, people take in lodgers, others start initiatives to address the needs of early childhood development ... and it goes on and on throughout the country. Every now and again a little story is highlighted on social media or in the press but the vast majority just carries on unnoticed, reflecting God’s love to the world.

Please join me today to pray for everyone, including each other here, involved in small beginnings, whether it continues small and ends small, grows or even becomes another ahahlali baseMjondo.

*All-loving God, when you created us you declared that what you had done was good. And every time your children do good, you rejoice and again and again you say to yourself, this is good. You are the God of permanent encouragement and we ask you today to cause all those living out this goodness to hear your pleasure and to be given more courage to continue what they are doing.*

*In this current climate in this country of so much negativity, cause us to stop for a moment and reflect, not on our failings, but on what we are doing that mirrors your love, that lights a candle of hope and light in a country that so needs it right now. Prayer is a conversation with God, so let’s take a moment to reflect on this and allow ourselves to see it for ourselves and to know God’s pleasure.*

*Deeply loving God, we open ourselves to you to allow ourselves to be encouraged, to allow ourselves to know your parenting love and pleasure.*

*In this time in this country most of what we hear about in the media is profound deficiencies in integrity, lies bringing bondage instead of your truth setting people free and so often all we know is*

*the loads of 'doing bad' that is happening. Let us instead come to God with gratitude for the many, many people who are continuing to walk in a different spirit. Let's pause again for a moment to allow to come to mind the people we know who are just doing the stuff, reflecting God's care and love to the world around them.*

*Loving God, we ask for your encouragement to find its way to all these wonderful people in a way that they would truly know it and feel it. Inspire us too, to make the effort to reach out, to say thank you, to encourage, whether it be in words, gifts, an email or a WhatsApp. Help us to incarnate the encouragement that you would love to extend to them.*

*And finally, whilst we in no way diminish everything we have reflected on so far, we also bring to mind and to you the big movers and shakers, those who have become big enough to challenge the principalities and powers. We ask that you would keep them strong, keep their light shining, hold their integrity steady and keep them in your truth.*

*And through all of us, we pray that the prayer for Africa would find expression:*

*God bless Africa and all the world,  
Guard our children, Guide our leaders,  
And give us peace. Amen*

Ian Proudfoot 11 April 2021