

We light this candle surrounded by barbed wire, each Sunday. The wire signifies the pain and suffering in the world because of injustice, by powers, principalities, and our own deliberate actions. The light of the candle symbolizes Christ in the world declaring that: the darkness will never overcome the light.

Today we reflect on the ongoing impact of the loadshedding programme of Eskom, since 2008. The cost to the economy has been horrendous.

But the disruption to human life can be considered unforgivable.

In the health sector there is a terminology: excess deaths. a particular disease is identified. A period of future time is identified and based on trends in previous times; a death rate is predicted. After the period has elapsed, analysis may show more deaths than predicted, i.e., the excess deaths. Often used for excess deaths in the elderly post winter. Also, in pandemics like Covid-19.

I want to suggest that we have a similar excess of human suffering as a direct result of the fraud, mismanagement, and political interference at Eskom over many years. The pain and suffering, the despair and sense of hopelessness has hit all communities, but the poor and vulnerable more so. No electricity means certain medicines can't be refrigerated at home, some modes of electrical equipment can't be used, at home, food perishes, the cold chain is compromised commercially, criminality increases with safety fears especially with the use of public transport during unlit periods morning and evenings. School children miss out on learning hours and continuity of learning is disrupted. The Report on primary school reading with meaning has just been published. The results are so bad. The psychological and mental health impact must be seriously considered as well.

Yes, many of these consequences have already become problematic during the covid-19 epidemic. Now, add more, much more. And sadly, a lot of the Eskom crisis impact, can be considered as preventable.

Books, articles, and the media proclaim a litany of accusations, and evidence of what is called institutionalized corruption. And days are spent by committees, discussing red herrings, and avoiding culpability. Little action has been taken so far.

The injustice of the real causes of the ESKOM crisis is a disgrace. There is, I believe an excess of pain, misery, hopelessness, fatigue, and anger that can be attributed to it. And the poor and vulnerable suffer most.

Let us pray.

Lord, we are thankful for your grace and mercy. for the love and compassion of Jesus in allowing us to understand the humanity of all people. The sanctity of the whole earth.

We are thankful for your love and peace, and the hope that is a constant presence in our lives and living, yet so often ignored, forgotten, and missed.

Lord, today we pray for the injustice of the impact of the Eskom crisis on our lives.

Lord, we pray for politicians, especially those who succumb to promoting self-interest and party-interest above all else. Jesus forgive those individuals who, it seems, risk turning our parliament, councils and legislatures into what you, O Christ, would call out as "dens of thieves" through the abuse and misuse of the State Procurement Systems.

Lord We are thankful for agencies, whistle blowers and activists who at personal risk have gnawed at the issues, bringing evidence to light.

Gracious parent God we pray for our Methodist church during next week's synod period and the opportunity for Christ-centered leadership.

We pray for our bishops and ministers and laity as they meet in the lived reality of loadshedding. May there be courageous discussion, and resolution making.

We pray for a renewed faithfulness in understanding the Gospel here and now in our figurative and literal darkness. May there be encouragement for all with a fervent hope of what can be done, and what should be done, in your Holy name.

Lord may we today seek to be light bringers as you are.

Amen

We share in the Prayer for Africa

2023 05 21 Gilbert Lawrence