

## Prayers for Peace, Hope & Justice

This week I was reminded about the trauma and suffering of people living amidst gang violence in Cape Town

A foster mother of 7 children living in Manenberg, Raeevah Benjamin, posted a video on social media taken after shooting between 2 rival gangs in her neighbourhood.

In desperation, she appealed for someone to give her a plot of land or a rundown building to establish a safe home for her family (01:31-02:09):

“...I don't want to live here anymore ... every day they shoot through my window ...”

On Friday morning she was interviewed and probed about her plea.

Let's listen to the interview on Cape Talk (06:24-10:46)

“...I can't live like this anymore ...”, she cries. Heart-wrenching.

The circumstances in which Raeevah and many families live in across the world are represented by the barbed wire: structural violence, poverty, unemployment, addiction, fear.

But in the midst of that chaos and suffering, we heard about signs of life, represented by the flicker of light of the candle:

- Looking out for each other, communicating when it's safe to return home.
- A mother of 7 children entrusted by Child Welfare Society who feeds children every morning.

Let us pray:

O Lord, as the cries of Raeevah Benjamin and other mothers in desperation pierce our ears and touch our hearts,

We remember your word through the Psalmist (Psalm 34) that:

- Your ears are open to their cries for help
- You hear your people when we call for help
- You rescue us from all our troubles
- You are close to the broken-hearted
- You rescue those whose spirits are crushed.

Thank you, Lord, for being close to us in our brokenness, For your promise to rescue us from our crushed spirits

Thank you for the courage of those who serve in areas where the weapons of war threaten them and the communities daily.

We give thanks for the life of Charl Kinnear of Bishop Lavis, gunned down in his driveway for his work to break the power of gang leaders. Comfort his loved ones in their grief and struggle for justice.

O Lord, we know that the roots of gangsterism are complex, but we also know that every gang member is created in your image, and like us, need to be reminded that they were born in love, by love and for love

That they belong to your family, called to love on another as you love us.

That power comes from you and shows itself in healing and reconciliation, not through the barrel of a gun.

Lord, help us as your children and as community to live those values that reflect your love, joy and peace. May Your Kingdom come.

We pray the prayer for Africa and the world:

GOD BLESS AFRICA AND THE WORLD, GUARD OUR CHILDREN, GUIDE OUR LEADERS AND GIVE US PEACE. AMEN