**THE SOUTH AFRICA WE ARE BELIEVING GOD FOR**

**Declaration: A Prayer of Lament with Faith and Hope**

25 years ago this nation was birthed in a rainbow dream when centuries of colonial and apartheid regimes gave way through negotiated resolution to a government elected by all the people of South Africa. We adopted a charter of rights and liberties in our constitution that committed to heal the divisions of our past, protect the sanctity of life and build a united democratic South Africa that would improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person. We echo those words in our that calls on God to protect and bless our people. Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrika.

Our founding father, Nelson Mandela, gave us vision and hope when he declared at his inauguration: “Never, never, never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another.” He cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which he said he hoped to live and to achieve. An ideal for which he was prepared to die. An ideal that cost him 27 years in prison and untold suffering for him and many others. He lived to see the birth of this ideal but died before its realisation.

We lament that:

* The bloodshed of our history continues today in the factional battles for political power in wards, branches, party lists, control over gangs and in the atrocious crimes that have become so commonplace.
* Poverty, unemployment and broken households have crippled our communities.
* We have worshipped false gods. We have worshipped the god of money. We have worshipped the false gods of our ancestors. We have worshipped and gratified self and committed sexual immorality. We have broken God’s law. We are guilty of idolatry. We have idolised our government. We have expected government to fix everything. God never intended for a government to be our saviour. We need to repent of this idolatry.
* This idolatry has enabled corruption. Oh, how we have plundered the resources meant for our liberation. Not just in past and present governments but in business as well. Even churches have not been exempt from abusing power or abdicating responsibility. We need to repent.
* Our rainbow dream lies in tatters. Like Isaiah prayed, we are a people of unclean lips and need to ask God to take the burning coal of his holy fire of love, truth, mercy and justice and cleanse our lives from this corrupt culture.

Joseph wore his rainbow dream as a coat of many colours. His dream cost him everything. He was sold as a slave. He was falsely accused. He spent many years in prison. He faced rejection, sexual temptation, violence, brutality and food insecurity. He endured untold suffering. Though he was a prisoner on the outside, he refused to become a prisoner on the inside of his own heart. They took away his coat. It probably lay in tatters. But they could not take away his dream. He never gave up on this dream because it was a God-given dream. And then one day God took him from prison to the throne. God gave him a plan to liberate an entire nation from widespread famine. He administered finances so well that his nation was a blessing to their whole region.

What are we to do today South Africa? Shall we let go of our dream. Shall we torch it and destroy it as a bad idea and turn to the arm of our own strength to liberate ourselves. Or shall we look to God once again and place our government and ourselves in our rightful places in the plan of God and say that what God did through Joseph in Africa He can surely do again today. By the grace of God, Joseph lead an African country to become the world’s economic superpower of its day. We say do it again Lord!

In the end Joseph was reconciled to his brothers. There was repentance. There was restitution. There was reconciliation. He saved his family, his nation and his region from destruction. He points us today to the only One who can save us today - Jesus Christ, Lord of all lords and King of all kings; the One to whom every knee will bow as King and every tongue will confess as Lord; the One Who said His kingdom is not of this world yet sent us into this world to be His ambassadors, to bring his will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, to be the salt, the light and the leaven in the dough of civil society that will bring transformation to the glory of God. We fix our eyes on the One Who overcame. We fix our eyes on the One Who knows our pain. We fix our eyes on the One Who lifts our shame. We fix our eyes on the One Who breaks the chains. Today we declare that the just shall live by faith and that faith shall live by justice.

Today we stand in the gap like Jesus did when he turned the greatest acts of injustice into the greatest act of justice and mercy of all time. Today we lift up the cross above our flag as our highest allegiance. Today we look to the throne of heaven above the thrones of mortal men. Today we ask God to revive our rainbow dream.

We are not surrendering to the gates of hell that wish to see our nation perish. We repent from our idolatry. We refuse to be held ransom by godless and wicked leaders. We will not give up on God and one another. We are not of those who shrink back and perish but we are of those who believe to the saving of the soul. We will press in. We will persevere. We will possess our promised land. We will believe again for the South Africa that God wishes to redeem and use as a light to the nations.

We are believing God for:

* **A South Africa where there is revival and reformation.** Where the fire of devotion to God and His Word burns strong in the heart of every man, woman and child. Where the Word of God washes over our souls to change our hearts and renew our minds to take the way and will of God into every sphere of life.
* **A South Africa with strong families.** We are calling absent fathers home. We are asking God to heal broken relationships. We are believing for a spirit of adoption to be poured out across our land. May women and children no longer be abused and broken but protected and released to their full potential.
* **A South Africa where there is economic freedom for all.** The wealth must surely be shared. The land must be enjoyed by all who work it. Surely God has given us the ability to create the wealth that will make poverty history. It is time for the kingdom of God to bring transformation to our marketplaces and dismantle systemic poverty. It is time for us to put our faith into action, to work hard, to create jobs and to try to be a blessing rather than get a blessing. We are believing for a South Africa that will invest and save rather than borrow and spend, that will export more than she imports, that will not just be a consumer but a producer and wealth creator. We believe South Africa is destined by God to be a blessing to the nations.
* **A South Africa that has godly leaders in government.** May the godless and corrupt be rooted out. May the godly shine bright. May God restore our leaders to be true servants of the people. May our leaders submit not just to the rule of law but also to the fear of God. Let us pray for our leaders – for wisdom, for the right plan to lead us into true and lasting freedom. But let us not abdicate our role in families, in churches, in businesses, in civil society. Let every citizen take up their role to govern their own lives well with Christlike character and a compassion for their fellow citizen.
* **A South Africa where there is care for the vulnerable**. Surely God has not forsaken the orphan and the widow. Surely God has not forsaken the prisoner, the naked, the homeless and the hungry. We know that Jesus will judge the nations and ask us as South Africa if we cared for the vulnerable, and we pray that on that judgement day this generation will be able to say, “Yes Lord. We did to the least of these what you asked us to.” God help us to do this. We cannot outsource this to government. No organisation can do this alone. It will take the faith of every believer being put into action. Everyone can make a difference. Together we can do it.
* **A South Africa where ethnic reconciliation models the way.** Surely this is the redemptive plan of God for us? For every tribe, every tongue and every ethnic group that makes up this rainbow land to show that we can walk together in harmony, to dismantle racism, defeat xenophobia, to serve and help each other. We are believing God for the realisation of the dream of our founding fathers. We are believing God for a nation where love overcomes hate, where respect and humility conquers pride and prejudice, where there is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, slave nor free but all are one in Christ.
* **A South Africa that will be a blessing to the nations.** The eyes of our continent are upon us. Can they get this right? The eyes of the world are upon us. What is God doing in South Africa they ask? Despite the brokenness of our past, God has a redemptive plan. The Gospel which has gone far and wide in our land through evangelism and revival must also go deep through discipleship and reformation. Only Jesus can change the heart of man. Only Jesus can change someone from the inside out. The light of Jesus must shine through our land. This is the light of reformation. Let it shine in South Africa.