

# Nelson Mandela Bay groups tackling poverty, unemployment together



Unemployment and Poverty Workshop attendees pinpoint their outreaches on a Nelson Mandela Bay ward map. (PHOTO: Frankie Simpson).

Looking over the full hall at the poverty and unemployment workshop in the South End Museum last Thursday I realised there are many Christian churches and NPOs engaged in uplifting unemployed people in the Nelson Mandela Bay metro.

This was further emphasised when those present mapped out their collective outreach in the Bay during the meeting organised by Transformation Christian Network (TCN) and Ikhala Trust as a follow-up to one which took place in November 2017.

Bernie Dolley of Ikhala Trust opened the morning by saying it was all about empowering people and that as all of us collaborate together it will enable us to make things happen in the social justice and unemployment arenas.

She said that when we work alone we get tired of addressing needs but when we work with others we can do more. We need to

use the strengths and assets of communities to leverage the social interventions.

She also spoke about funding and said that her German funding will run out and she needs to show results of the social impact to funders.

### **Strengthening communities**

She then asked: “Are we addressing poverty and are we creating jobs?” On government funding she said there is R256-billion circulating in South Africa in the NGO sector, so money is not the issue – what we need is to build the strength of communities to voice what they want. We need to take responsibility and build people’s confidence. We need to show people we care deeply enough to effect change and not treat them like clients. We need to encourage them to look at themselves and ask: “What can I do to improve myself?”

She also spoke about the tourism industry, saying we should not underestimate Port Elizabeth as being a great destination for visitors because last year she was part of a conference of 170 people from 73 countries held in Port Elizabeth and many of the attendees said they planned to come back here.

She offered to supply seedlings to those who are promoting food security if they were willing to collect from her.

### **Nehemiah Project**

Trevor Jennings of TCN followed up by saying that we must work with the government and make things happen. He spoke of the Nehemiah pilot project which is working with ward volunteers, where so far, 18 wards out of 60 have been covered.

This project is based on Nehemiah having all the builders of the walls of Jerusalem doing so, while also being ready to fight against attack from the enemy – work and prayer are needed at all times.

Jennings said that they had identified focus areas and would

like to approach people who could be a source of reference and who were prepared to share their knowledge with others, saying: “We are here to inspire and help one another, not to grow anyone’s network for personal reasons.”

He warned that people were looking at the integrity of church leaders to deliver the goods.

Everyone was then asked to collect coloured pins representing the outreach they are involved in – white: education, job creation, skills training, youth, children, disability; green: food security; red: gender issues for both men and women; blue: sports, arts and culture; black: elderly; yellow: other – health, environment, safety and security or any other.

The pins were then placed on a ward map of Port Elizabeth within the wards where the outreaches were being carried out. At the end the map showed a wonderful array of pins, highlighting how much is being done already – and what if harnessed together could be a mighty force for change and upliftment of people’s lives in the metro.

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**Men of Hope holding first PE conference this weekend**

## **City men invited to join march on Saturday morning**

Hope Restoration Ministries is hosting its first Men of Hope conference at the Nangoza Jebe Centenary Hall in New Brighton, in Port Elizabeth this weekend – from Thursday May 24 to Sunday May 27.

On Saturday morning the men will participate in a citywide march against violence against women and children and to say no to drugs. All men in the city are welcome to join the march which starts at 7pm from the conference venue. One of the aims of the march which involves many different churches is to portray the fact that there are still men out there that are ready to protect women and children.

The conference has been running for some years and has been extended to PE at a time of much turmoil in communities and the country as the whole, which prompted the ministry to feel it was time for men to take their stand, said Men of Hope spokesperson, Sonwabile Ngozwana.

The plan is to expand the Men of Hope nationally, establishing regional offices, he said.

The Men of Hope marketing campaign for the PE event, which included radio stations and local churches, was a success, and they had a good response from men in the city and even from other regions.

**24-27 MAY 2018**  
The speakers of the PE conference include the vision-bearer of Men of Hope, Pastor Chris Mathebula, from Johannesburg, Pastor J Jadezweni, from PE, Craig Robinson, from Cape Town and

Pastor D Robinson. The conference services start daily at 6.30pm. After the Saturday morning march there will be a Q&A session with the panel from 1pm where issues that are affecting men will be discussed. Women may attend the Thursday, Friday, and Sunday services but the Saturday sessions are for men only.

The conference theme of Braveheart was chosen to recognise men who have overcome difficult situations in their lives, said Ngozwana. They wanted to encourage men to have brave hearts to face all kinds of circumstances, and to stand for righteousness and the hopes of men. At a time when men were being called trash, they were making a statement that there were still men who were brave enough to stand against the abuse of women and children.

For more information about the conference contact Sonwabile Ngozwana at 041 487 0408.

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**PE pastor running Comrades  
for smiles**



Pastor Matthew Cullis on the road.

As 20 000 runners gear up for the 2018 Comrades Marathon on June 10, Port Elizabeth pastor Matthew Cullis aims to make the most of his third Comrades attempt by raising money for a cause close to his home and heart.

Before Matthew's son, Joel, was born with a cleft palate, he never imagined that he would be raising funds for reconstructive surgeries on babies and children affected by cleft lips and palates across South Africa, let alone that he'd be running marathons.

After a sports injury he had stopped all forms of exercise and had gained a considerable amount of weight.

“I broke my collarbone playing rugby. During my recovery period I began gaining weight, feeling impatient, and found myself depressed and stressed about finances. A close friend confronted me about this, and that’s when I decided to run my first 5km race.”

Motivated by the medal he received he ran his next few races.

“I showed up to my first 42.2km race in rugby shorts and three year old tekkies. I was wearing glasses as well. I went from completing a 5km run to running a full marathon that December. At the 27km mark, my legs were cramping and I was convinced I couldn’t go any further, but I did.

“When I reached the finish line, I felt like I had nearly died.”

Three years later Matthew attempted his first Comrades Marathon.



Matthew Cullis running his first marathon in 2013 .

This year will mark his third attempt at finishing the world-famous race, and though he wasn’t able to finish the first two, he’s not giving up on reaching the finish line.

“I’m not giving up on finishing. Comrades is a massive challenge, but my son has faced an even greater challenge. Families who are not on medical aid and have children who are

born with cleft lips and palates face such a great challenge.

“There is no comparison between that and my third attempt at Comrades. I’m doing this for my son, and to prove that you can keep going, even when the challenge seems too big. Have a go!”

Matthew admits that running races – and losing weight as a result thereof – has had a great impact on his preaching, marriage and overall wellbeing.

“I was unhappy with myself. When the weight started coming off I felt more confident, and this had an impact on my preaching. Around people, with my wife and even in my relationship with God, the way I felt about myself and my weight-gain was getting in the way. It was bugging me. When the weight came off, my life improved.”

As he prepares for the 2018 Comrades Marathon Pastor Matthew Cullis, who is running in support of The Smile Foundation, regularly updates his Facebook followers on his Comrades journey and the total funds raised for the reconstructive surgeries.

If you would like to support him, visit his profile on <https://www.backabuddy.co.za/champion/project/iron-man-for-smile>

Find out more about The Smile Foundation and how you can support this initiative at <http://www.smilefoundationsa.org>

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**Churches            hosting            Nelson**



# Mandela Bay unemployment and poverty workshop



At the inaugural Nelson Mandela Bay unemployment and poverty summit last November are, from the left, the Revd Xhanti Mhlontlo, the Revd Andrea Potgieter, Bishop Bethlehem, Canon Claire Phelps, and Dr Bukelwa Hans. (PHOTO: Frankie Simpson)

Anybody interested in tackling the problem of unemployment and poverty in Nelson Mandela Bay is invited to attend a workshop at the South End Museum, Port Elizabeth on Thursday May 17.

Organised by the Ikhala Trust and the NM Bay Church Leaders, the gathering is a follow-up to the inaugural unemployment and poverty workshop that was held in the metro in November last year.

The objectives of the workshop are to obtain feedback from current participants and motivate other like-minded people, in every municipal ward in our metro, to connect and network in order to make a difference in the lives of the unemployed and

poor in the metro, says Trevor Jennings of Transformation Christian Network (TCN).

He says interested individuals or groups from churches, business, education, government, the NGO Sector and civil society are invited to participate in the workshop. For more information and to book your free seat please contact TCN on 083 659 2748 or Anathi Magongo on 041 582 3750.

“Our country has arrived at a crossroad. Poverty and unemployment, especially among the youth, are at explosive levels,” says Jennings in a press release.

He continues: “What is clear from the shenanigans in the Nelson Mandela Bay council is that the politicians will never solve our problems while they continue to focus on wrestling power from each other in their narcissistic power games.

“The time has come for every church and congregant to get involved!

“Most churches have resources. For example, a large number of church buildings stand empty for 90% of the week. They could be used as skills and training centers or house small businesses like sewing cooperatives.

“And every Sunday an enormous reservoir of talent and skills can be found in the pews. Many have the time and ability to get involved in assisting the unemployed and poor to equip themselves for that promised better life.

“There are many examples of successful and readily available courses being offered by churches and NGOs, such as ABCD, Siya Sebenza, Isivuno and Farming God’s Way.”

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# Church helps warring Mthatha taxi groups reach peace accord



Taxi operators came to Christ during a prayer meeting organised by the Mthatha Ministers Fraternal.

Whether you like them or not, taxi operators play an important role in South Africa's economy. They ensure that millions of South Africans, who depend on them as their mode of transport, get to their destinations on time.

However, these operators have a reputation for reckless driving and for also engaging in acts of violence in their quest for increased profit. The rivalry between individual operators and taxi associations can sometimes lead to loss of life.

The town of Mthatha has witnessed such incidents with clashes between Uncedo Taxi Association and Border Alliance Taxi Association. The violence between these two associations has claimed 60 lives since 2016.

The killings have occurred on the R61 road between Port St John's and Mthatha and on the N2 highway between Mthatha and Tsoalo. Much has been done to put an end to these senseless

killings but with little progress.

The new Minister of Police Bheki Cele stepped in, and he announced an indefinite closure of these routes. He likened the taxi industry to a funeral parlour because of the increased body count occurring as a result of their selfish actions.



EARLIER: Taxi operators burned tyres in Mthatha to protest the closure of routes.

Faced with the loss of livelihood, the operators responded by burning tyres all over the streets of Mthatha in protest. But as they say, every dark cloud has a silver lining.

The breakthrough, in this case, happened as a result of efforts by various stakeholders, including the Mthatha Ministers Fraternal. The fraternal organized a citywide prayer event at the local town hall which was attended by taxi operators and other stakeholders.

The facilitator of the prayer meeting was Pastor David Mqamelo of Good News Community Church. Mqamelo also works for the Nelson Mandela Museum and is also the Deputy Chairperson of

Provincial Community Road Safety Council.

The prayer meeting was held on April 15, and Mqamelo was touched by what transpired on the day.

“In a packed hall, we saw taxi operators surrendering themselves to Christ. They asked for forgiveness to the community of Mthatha and called for peace.”

With hearts now softened, the operators went on to have a meeting with Minister Cele, local government officials and religious leaders. In that meeting, held on April 20, the minister gave the taxi industry a firm warning that he’s prepared to shut down their operations permanently if their violent actions lead to further deaths.

The meeting ended with a peace accord signed between the two associations – with the minister and MEC co-signing.

The result is that the moratorium was lifted and as taxi operations resumed from the 21st April 2018.

Pastor Mqamelo believes that the church’s intervention was a catalyst in getting this deal signed. He says, “We thank the religious sector for their influence, intervention, and prayers during this period. With God all things are possible.”

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**‘Stand’ worshipers returning  
to declare God’s goodness  
nightly in PE city centre**



Anton and Kim Hutton, with their son Elijah.

Worshippers will be back next week to take a nightly “Stand” in front of the Port Elizabeth City Hall in what the initiative visionary Anton Hutton believes will grow into a movement that will unite the Church and the city.

During “Stand’s” first three-week run around 20 to 30 worshippers from all over the city prayed and sang God’s praises together on Vuyisile Mini square in the city centre from 9.30pm to 10.30pm from Monday to Friday, and people from the area “rocked up” with some “going through deliverance – just manifesting,” Hutton said.

Stand was temporarily suspended in mid-April for Hutton to attend a conference in Johannesburg. But the worshippers plan to start again on Monday April 30 and aim to keep going as long they feel God requires.

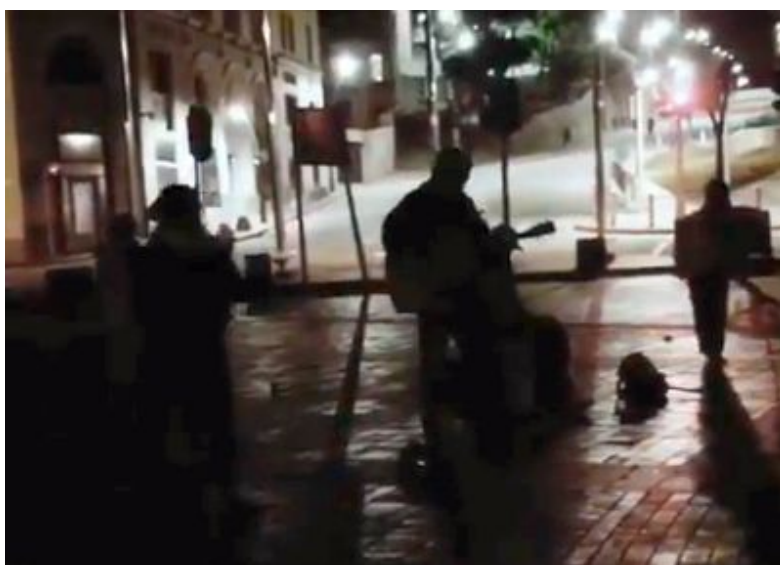
Hutton said that one night last month, while worshipping God at a monthly gathering of [Burn 24-7](#) worship leaders from about 25 different churches, he felt God challenging him to go and sing His praises over the city every night.

“I battled for two or three days but realised it was a call,” he said.

Explaining their assignment, the 32-year-old husband, father of a toddler, and youth and children's pastor and elder at Ebenezer International church, said: "I am still discovering more of the purpose. I don't understand it all. I don't need to understand it all. God is unveiling His purpose.

"The big thing is just to be obedient."

He said they were on the square each night "to release the sound".



Stand – prayer and praise in front of the PE City Hall.

"And its not even to pray for specific things. I think it's to declare God's goodness all the time – to sing His praises. Praise is such a powerful weapon.

"We get so caught up with the negative we see around us and we forget that God is good and the more we start to declare His goodness, I believe we will start to shift the atmosphere. So its about putting hope back into the atmosphere," he said.

"Right opposite the City Hall is a building that says 'City Hope' in big letters – actually it's a store but it's so prophetic because every time people come to this time of worship they are reminded that there is hope for the city.

“It’s awesome to see how people are becoming passionate about the city again,” he said.



‘City Hope’

Memorable moments on the square to date included a night when the city’s executive mayor Athol Trollip and his wife Janine joined them in worship for a while. It had also been amazing to see people from nearby student residences, and from the street, arrive and connect with the atmosphere of praise and worship.

“In the last week [of the first 3-week stint] we had a young lady – you could see she was into prostitution – she was going through some major deliverance there on the square.

“I had a guy come up one night – God set him free. He was actually high when he came there.

“I had the privilege of even praying for some metro security guys who were attracted there.”

Hutton said he had experienced some personal challenges during the first three weeks of Stand as he was also involved in a campaign that was running at his church. But he had felt a burden to worship in front of the city hall every night.

“In this season I really feel the need to step out and get



involved in the kingdom. I just feel it's time to do radical things that is going to shift some stuff."

"Fortunately, " he said, his wife, Kim, who works for a citrus exporting company, was "120%" behind what God was calling him to do.

"In the last season God has really shifted us both towards the same things, so I can really say it's not my ministry but our ministry."

He said Kim was a passionate worshiper of God who "carries a huge prophetic grace".

"If she could be with me on the square every night she would, She was there for several nights with our son, and I said to her for the sake of our son she needed to stay at home," Hutton said.

"I feel like it [Stand] will grow into a movement to unite the church and unite the city – one of the most powerful ways to do this is through prayer and worship.

"Part of the dream is to have 24/7 prayer and worship happening."

Everyone is invited to join Stand on weekday nights from 9.30 to 10.30pm. For more information, contact Anton on 084 467 5548.

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**Burn 24-7 linking up with**

# #imagine for 24-hour PE worship event



Burn 24-7 is inviting lovers of Jesus across Port Elizabeth to come and unite to seek God for revival in the city and nation in a 24-hour worship event together with national youth movement #imagine.

The upcoming prayer and worship event will start on Friday May 4 2018 at 7pm at Doxa Deo Church (26 Benmore Avenue, Brymore, opposite Walker Drive Shopping Centre). It will run until Saturday May 5 at 7pm.

Everyone is welcome to join in as and when able, with the freedom to come and go as needed to over the duration of that time. Organiser and regional Burn 24-7 leader, Peter Gooch, issued a friendly request that those attending please respect the attitude of worship while in the venue by keeping conversations to a minimum.

This time, Burn 24-7 is excited to be collaborating with #imagine, for a re#imagine movement. This is following their annual Christian youth experience outside Port Elizabeth recently. ”

After a teenager has been to #imagine, he becomes an ‘imagineer’,” explains #imagine leader, Anthony Jacobs. Re#imagine is an opportunity for “imagineers” to step into a

leadership role themselves, applying and sharing what they've learnt during their #imagine experience.

Burning hearts in over 150 cities all across the globe are returning to their first love. The Burn 24-7 movement holds to the conviction that revival requires the unity of the Church, across denominations, ethnicities, ages and languages. And because worship fuels mission, there will be an opportunity to take the love of Christ to the community in an outreach event on Saturday May 5. The outreach will start at 12.30-2.30pm, meeting at the Doxa Deo Church. For any additional information about the outreach, contact Peter Gooch on 083 657 4213.

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## Conference for women who need to 'arise from dead'



The "Talitha Cumi" conference in Despatch, Eastern Cape, on Saturday May 5 is especially aimed at women who wear masks to hide their pain, hurt and disappointments, say the event hosts who are also the organisers of the annual God's Karoo Women conference.

The conference name echoes the Aramaic words that Jesus spoke to a dying girl, urging her to arise.

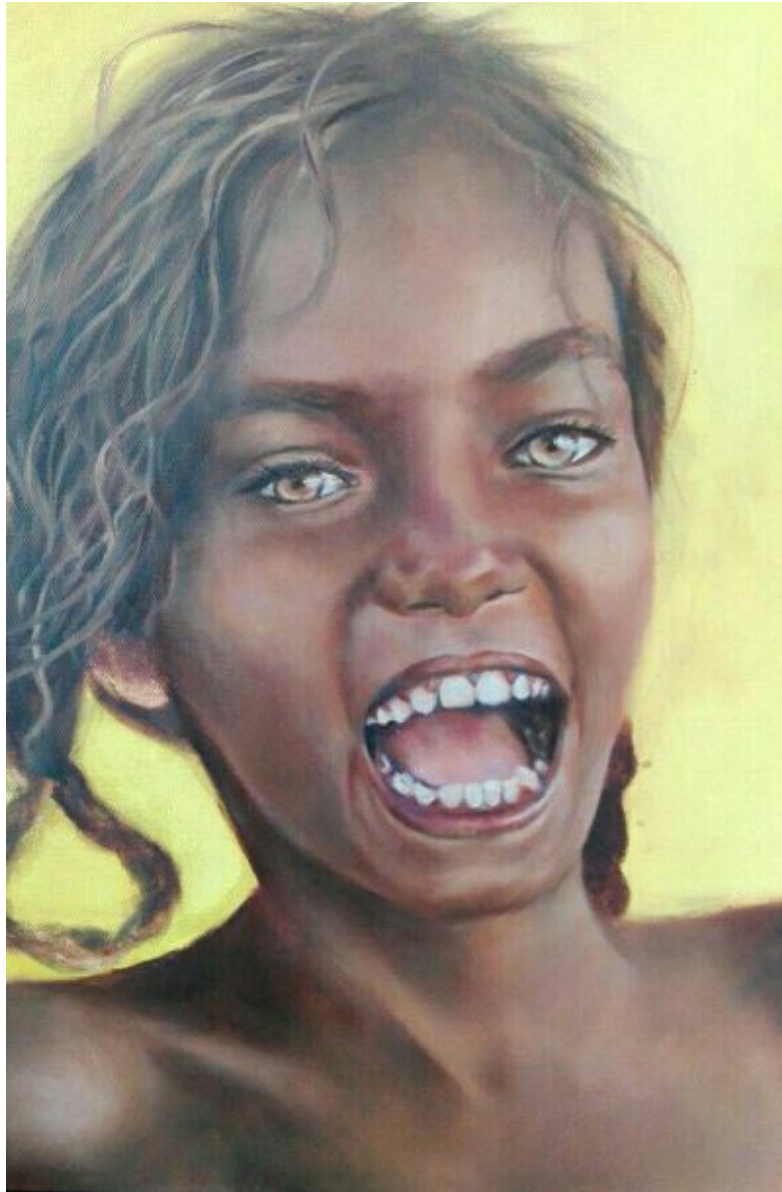
The aim of the event is to meet the needs of women who have given up hope and who desperately need a touch of the Lord who wants to raise them out of their “dead” situation and fill them with new life and hope.

“It is also for ladies who would just like to come and hear how to be there for someone in distress, or just want to be uplifted themselves, then this is the place to be,” say the organisers.

The conference will be at the AGS Lighthouse Church in De Lange Street, Despatch from 9am to 5pm on May 5. The cost, which includes a light meal, is R50. More information is available at [wernich@telkomsa.net](mailto:wernich@telkomsa.net) or by calling 326 2089.

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**The nameless girl – a testimony of God’s hand in all that happens**



Susan Smith's unfinished painting of a happy and free child which was meant to be the first in a series highlighting the hidden reality of human trafficking.

**A letter from Port Elizabeth artist Susan Smith about painting with a purpose, finding meaning in a setback, and making a difference**

Dear reader

Allow me to start by sharing some of the events that led up to me writing this letter.

I have been painting for quite some time as an art-student. In 2017, I was invited by a group of artists to take part in the Grahamstown National Arts Festival (NAF). This happened in a time where my heart's greatest desire was to create paintings that would carry a deeper meaning, and in the last few years I started trusting God for help and guidance with every painting.



Susan Smith.  
(PHOTO: Facebook).

I completed a sequence of seven portraits named *Beloved Series*, for the Grahamstown NAF in June 2017. My inspiration for this series came from a book I read the year before on the Bride of Christ. Throughout the whole process of creating *Beloved Series* God constantly gave me confirmation through His word, and specific scriptures for each of the seven paintings. I was thrilled at the opportunity to share their meaning with their new owners, by putting a printed copy on the back of each painting, and in that way get the message for each across.

After the exhibition, God started opening a door. I was invited to share the *Beloved Series* with women at my local church, and from there I have received a few other invitations to speak with women in and around Port Elizabeth and share the *Beloved Series* and God's heart for His beloved daughters. Up to date over 700 women have heard the *Beloved Series* message. My desire was to share the message with the person that buys

the painting, but God used it for something bigger.

### **Rescued just in time**

A people upliftment programme, called "Pop-Up" started in the Sidwell Area of Port Elizabeth. This programme started, in April 2017, through Louise Van Heerden (a friend in my church, Doxa Deo). I accompanied Louise to a safe haven for children, also located in Sidwell, in a block of flats (well known to the local people of PE as the "brown flats"). Some of the biggest drug lords in Port Elizabeth operate from these flats. After our visit I was overwhelmed at seeing the children and hearing their stories. The same week we visited the safe haven, there was an incident at the "brown flats". A woman sold her 5-year-old daughter to someone for drug money. This little girl was lucky enough to be found by the police in time, just before she was trafficked.

This reality was overwhelming to me, and I asked myself how I could really make a difference. It took me a while to realise that the one thing I can do, is to paint the "faces" of homeless and nameless children and people, and through my art help bring this "hidden" reality of human trafficking to people. My desire to do a series on this topic grew stronger, although my knowledge on this is very limited. This is not only about "physical" trafficking, but also about how the enemy traps our "minds" daily with negative thoughts and things that happens with and around us.

This is where my story starts and the reason for this letter...

### **Innocence and happiness**

I paint every Wednesday with a group of local artists and friends. I've been working on a portrait of a young girl that radiates innocence and happiness ... not really anything to do with trafficking! At that point in time, I was still working on ideas for the series, and I never thought that she could be part of this important topic. I finished her on Wednesday February 21. I packed up to go home and carefully placed her,

paint still wet, at the passenger side of my car. As I was driving home, every now and then I glanced at her to make sure that I was completely satisfied with her. According to me she was perfect. It suddenly dawned on me that this painting symbolises "the happy child" before they get trafficked. She represents innocence, joy, happiness and a care-free childhood, precisely how God intended every child's life to be ... free and happy. That was when I knew in my heart that she will be the first painting of my human trafficking series!

I made a quick stop at the Spar on my way home, but only when I got home I realised my painting was no longer where I left her. I searched all through my car even though I knew I never moved her! That's when I realised that she was gone. I clearly remembered locking my car, but somehow someone managed to block my remote!

My first thought was, who would steal a painting? I know her monetary value is not much and her only true value is what she means to me ... she probably got stolen because there was nothing else to take in my car.

### **Shocking reality**

At first the loss after all my hard work made me cry, and the absolute pointlessness of the act made me feel angry and frustrated. Immediately a shocking reality hit me ... it felt as if God wanted me to grasp, if only a fraction, of the absolute horror and devastation parents would experience at losing their child!

My focus shifted completely, to the senseless stealing of millions of innocent and happy children. My painting was still wet, if by any chance I would get her back "she" would never be the same again, unrecognisable! Another true reality of what happens in real life to children ... their childhood and their innocence, are stolen forever.

The painting was "nameless", a fact on human trafficking is



that, most children age five and under that are stolen will not remember their real names, from that moment, they lose their identity.

I have no reference of the finished portrait. The last photo of her was taken with my cell phone, with only my bed lamp as a light. I had sent this to my daughter for her to see the progress of the painting, just because she asked me to. If not for that, I would not have taken a picture of her, and I wouldn't have had any reference of her!!! How many children get stolen without a proper reference or photo of them?

One friend suggested to file a police report and put up a poster of her with a "promise of a reward" on return of my painting. I remember thinking, if "she" was my real child ... is this what I had to do? It was as if the reality of what happens in such a situation was playing out in front of me.

Someone else asked if I would want to re-paint her. Again, another reality, I could re-paint a portrait, but no child could ever be replaced by another! How could I have imagined that I could ever comprehend the profound impact and trauma of an act so evil!

### **God opens doors**

Only 24 hours later I received an invitation by a friend to an event that was focused on the topic of human trafficking, held in PE on February 24. I believe that God open doors, because He is faithful, and He is interested in the desires of our hearts. I had been hoping to find a company in Port Elizabeth who are involved in awareness programmes on human trafficking for about two months prior to this invitation.

At the event, the lady that spoke said the following: "You may think that you can't do anything to make a difference or you may look at the statistics and get overwhelmed by it. But you can make a difference if you educate yourself on this topic and realise that this is a reality and that it does happen

around us every day!!”

I met a wonderful lady there, who together with my friend that invited me to this meeting, encouraged me to write this story. If just one other person is touched by reading this and becomes aware of this reality, I have made a difference!

Christine Caine founder of A21 said the following in an interview: “People think we can’t change the world, but what if we can change the world for one person, aren’t we then changing the world?”

I truly do not know how the rest of this series will turn out! All I do know is that in my previous experience, God used a desire that was in my heart to share His message of the *Beloved Series* to His Bride (the church) through art. I also know God can use the “natural” things we do in obedience, for His Glory!!!

### **Co-labouring with God**

Bill Johnson wrote in his book, *The Supernatural Power of a Transformed Mind*: “... until Christians decide to co-labour with God in unheard-of creativity and off-the-map dreams, we won’t change society and the world. We can’t rely on God to do everything. We can’t demand that He come up with all the solutions; we must co-labour with Him. In my personal experience, the more I come into an intimate place with the Lord, the more He blesses the labour of my hands with creativity and new ideas. That is God’s desire for every person.”

May we not miss God’s hand in all that happens around us.  
May we not miss God’s voice when He speaks to us.

A dear friend encouraged me in saying: “Susan, your paintbrush is your weapon of warfare!” I believe God is asking you today, what is your weapon of warfare?

This Scripture encouraged me: *What could I do, King Agrippa? I*

*couldn't just walk away from a vision like that! I became an obedient believer on the spot. – Acts 26:19-20 (MSG)*

With all my love

Susan Smith

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## **PE worshipers taking nightly “Stand” in front of city hall**



Worshippers from all over the city of Port Elizabeth are gathering every night to “Stand” on behalf of the city in the name of Jesus.

Pastor Anton Hutton catalysed the “Stand” worship initiative following a gathering of Burn 24-7 leaders earlier this month as he and some friends began to gather nightly to pray and worship in Vuyisile Mini Square in front of the City Hall.

This week saw the official invitation go out to Christ-followers across the city to come and join in from 9.30pm to 10,30pm every Monday to Friday, until such a time as the leaders feel it is time to bring the meetings to an end. There

will most certainly be gatherings every night this week.

The worship initiative outside the city hall is taking place at a time of high political tension in the city ahead of a council meeting next week in which opposition groups are aiming to take over from the current DA-led coalition.

Anton says the call to “Stand” is simply a call to sing over the city, not to ask anything, but just to sing. “Stand” is derived from Ezekiel 22:30 – *I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one.*

What began as one or two worshippers singing over Port Elizabeth two weeks ago has become a group averaging 20 to 30 people. Last night (Tuesday), Executive Mayor Athol Trollip and his wife responded to the call to “Stand” on behalf of the city by worshipping with the group for a while.



United worship at our city hall, going every night this week ! #comealong #beliftedup #beliftedhigher #unitedwestand @cityofpe @atholtrollip

*A post shared by [burn247pe](#) (@burn247pe) on Mar 21, 2018 at 1:14am PDT*

“We believe that praise is one of the greatest weapons that we have,” says Anton.

He draws attention to the biblical account of King Jehoshaphat going into battle with the praise singers – those “appointed...to sing to the Lord and to praise him for the splendour of his holiness” – leading the charge, and the victory that came through their worship (2 Chronicles 20:20-26).

He also expressed his belief that declaring the goodness of God from a place symbolic of power and authority like City Hall results in the demolishing of strongholds and the breaking of chains holding Port Elizabeth.

“Christ is the hope for the city,” says Anton, “no political party, no leader, but Christ is the hope. We’re not looking to man; we’re looking to the author and perfecter of our faith.”

Everyone is invited to come and “Stand” on behalf of Port Elizabeth – musician or not. Join Anton and others in

declaring the goodness of God over the city. For more information, contact Anton on 084 467 5548.