

## **A Tapestry of tragedy and love**

As a high-energy individual I'm generally drawn to activities that require robust contact, fast pace and sweat! My wife Sue on the other hand is a patient, keen and skilled "stitcher", preferring cross-stitch but also interested in tapestry. It has always amazed me when I investigate a tapestry or cross stitch design, she is busy with, whilst the front is normally an exquisite design, the back just seems to be a chaotic, colourful jumble of threads, with seemingly no shape at all! Life can feel like that at times.

A recent story reaching across an Ocean expanse, reminded me of such a tapestry. Raven, a lady I know in the suburb I live in, in Cape Town often challenges people who can, to partner with individuals or families in very difficult circumstances. On her Facebook Group – Goodwill Donations she mentioned a family with unemployed Dad and Mom with 3 sons and a daughter. The 9-year-old son had won a place in a boys' soccer team, but needed a substantial amount to purchase the kit and pay for costs associated with participating in the tournament. However, the family are struggling just to put food on the table (especially at this special time of the year), let alone pay what was a small fortune for them for their son to live a dream.

I asked Raven if I could post the story on my personal Facebook page and with agreement of not mentioning the family's name with concern of possible negative reaction, I posted it. Within minutes I heard from a family I know in Michigan USA who had volunteered as a family of 5 for 6 months some years back at a care Center Sue and I ran for abandoned and HIV/AIDS babies.

This family had experienced unimaginable pain with the tragic loss of their youngest teenage son Zach, 4 years ago. Then just 3 weeks ago their nephew, Keaton, at age 16, with dreams to one day become a pro soccer player, collapsed whilst playing indoor soccer, caused by a blood clot in his leg that travelled to his lungs. Another bright, passionate, loving young man in their family lost. How do you speak into and comfort families, who have suffered such heart-breaking loss?

But when Lori (the Mom of Zach) messaged me, she told me the family were being sustained and ministered to by the faith of Christ, the God they love and serve and felt helping this young man (and family) in an over-populated, drug and gang engulfed area, would be a way of honouring the loss of these 2 precious teens, who are so close to their hearts. So, their desire to meet the full costs for the pre-teen South African to participate in this tournament was organised and a meeting between Raven and the family took place.

The family were overwhelmed and completely stunned by this gesture and repeatedly thanked Raven (who they know well), for sensitively making their sons need known. I picture in my mind, the smile of that young boy and imagine the racing of his heart, first when he puts his kit on, then runs on to take part with his team at the tournament.

Hearts have been torn apart, broken, challenged, knitted together, across the Oceans, forming a human Tapestry that in the circumstances of both families in Cape Town and Michigan, have resulted in a love amongst strangers...including a Creator who is interested in and involved enough in the details of beautiful tapestries of our lives, with all the messiness that's behind the beauty.

A Divine intervention in a "Tapestry of tragedy and love".