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The last observation to be made about this woman and her approach to Jesus is that it was precious, not cheap. For her to take this approach to Jesus was not easy, as it cost her something - the material cost of the perfume and the cost in the form of the time she put into arranging to meet with him. There must have been also an emotional cost – the risk of being rejected because someone was familiar with her past.

This illustration of the woman with a tarnished reputation is part of the Mount Hope strategy, they believe that one should not look down on tarnished people, but to welcome them and let them give and share what they have. They also believe that God is more concerned about a person's heart and motive than one's outward appearance.

### **8.3.2 The Kingdom of God envisions a situation of a restored humanity**

Noteworthy about the Kingdom of God is its transcendence above all else. In Jesus' instruction on how we should pray, after calling to our Father in "Heaven," then only follows the plea to ask for his Kingdom to come! Here, the clear suggestion is that the One who rules the heavens is being petitioned to allow his rule to come to earth too! "Kingdom" refers to the rule and the reign of God. Praying for his rule and reign is part of the strategy that the Mount Hope Church employs. They believe the Scripture that says, "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16 - KJV).

### **8.3.3 Witnessing and the way of life as a missional praxis**

The essence of Theology is not only to know God, but, according to Hendriks (2004:30,33), while knowing, it is also to discern God's will and guidance for how we should live and witness.

According to the researcher's observation as per several portions of the New Testament, the topmost priority in the mandate Jesus gave his church was that of being witnesses. For instance, Acts 1:8 says, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

However, the researcher's conviction is that the most powerful form of witnessing is one where lifestyle or the way of life and testimony about one's faith are congruent to one

another. This strategy that the Mount Hope leadership employs is clearly evident in the testimonies of the individuals in chapter 4 of this research. These individuals, and the rest of the Mount Hope Church members, are encouraged to share their testimonies whenever the opportunity arises.

#### **8.3.4 A missional praxis and transformative action (Hendriks 2004:33)**

The researcher's context cries out for freedom, not only from abject poverty, but from the factors that keep poverty alive in their context. A mentality of asking for hand-outs; survival by only seeking a job and not dreaming of owning a business; being dependent on governmental grants - all these amount to a dependency syndrome that keeps poverty alive and effectively robs people in this context of their God-given dignity. At Mount Hope, God's mission translates from theory to practice when the people described above are transformed from waiting for hand-outs to becoming useful, even if it is by volunteering, and from being unemployed to being self-employed and, ultimately, being employers themselves.

##### **8.3.4.1 Upliftment instead of sustenance**

The following is definitely not a way to go about ministry; this approach defies the goal of restoring human dignity and it actually pushes people deeper and deeper into a death trap and humiliates them even further.

In the context of this research, it has become quite common to find that most humanitarian organisations discharge the function of merely sustaining the environment. Mitchell's Plain is already weighed down by a begging mentality, a dependency syndrome, as well as poverty inclinations. There may be hungry people to be fed, but feeding schemes are only sustaining factors that will not take people to new dimensions.

The government of the day has not helped the situation by handing social grants to able-bodied people who could access decent money by earning it. The government simply helped to sustain the inclination of some poor people in this context to demand pity for their condition of misfortune. These so-called poor people already have no dignity, and, in their context, the last thing needed is the development of "a spirit of entitlement," because of their poverty. This act virtually says to them: "If you are poor, someone already owes you

something by virtue of your poverty.” For this reason, Mount Hope believes that the situation needs uplifting, not sustenance.

#### **8.4 SYSTEMATIC DESCRIPTION OF THE MOUNT HOPE STRATEGY**

**8.4.1 The leadership** took a conscious lead in shaping the atmosphere and also the development of a dynamic that supports the presence of diverse elements within the Church. Mount Hope’s leadership has learnt a crucial lesson from the errors that most leaders in the Church of Jesus Christ committed. They have learnt not to antagonize people who have a different thinking system, as that very act will prevent the prevalence of healthy diversity in the Church. They are also committed to resist the polarization of the Church at all costs.

**8.4.2 Worship services** are crucial in the Mount Hope context .They believe that prayer precedes and is part of preparing the place for God to be worshipped. Making people feel welcome is also a vital part of the worship service. The welcome takes place by any member who would be asked to welcome the people attending the services as follows: “Welcome to Mount Hope Church, we are a people you can call **family** and this is a place you can call **home** and it definitely is a place where dreams become a **memory**.” This is the kind of welcome one receives when attending their worship services. Spontaneous and expressive worship is lavished upon God in these services.

Many of the people come from dysfunctional families and Mount Hope creates an environment for the people to be part of something functional.

**8.4.3 The primary diaconia service/welfare ministry** is directed towards the drug addicts (male and female). The researcher believes that drugs are not the real problem, but they are a symptom. In his view, the root cause for addiction is called the “unspoken.” Mount Hope started a program called Hope Again Recovery Home that created a safe environment in which these addicts could confront the causes of their addiction. These individuals already feel condemned when they enter the program, so the leaders believe that their clients should not be beaten up further. Scriptures such as, “for we all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23), and “For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous (Romans 5:19), are introduced to the clients, so that they can understand that the facilitators must recognise that they also were sinners at one time, and that they too have a need for God.



The clients, as they are known, come into the program as *unbelievers*, but when they leave after six months, they leave as *believers*. Social workers, the police or magistrate courts either refer these clients to the program, or they are walk-ins. They are firstly assessed and tested to determine the kind of drugs to which they are addicted. If drugs are still to be found in their system, they are then referred to a detoxification centre before they are accepted into the program. About 30 male clients live in a dormitory set up at the church building and about 12 females live in a rented house. The program is faith-based and the Bible is the manual. Two Christian social workers, one auxiliary social worker, four pastors and four of the laity form part of the facilitators at the program, the focus of which is behaviour modification and spiritual renewal. This program differs from other institutions, because it entails life skills, Bible studies, personal counselling, group therapy and recreation. Many programs don't believe that clients can be delivered from their drug addiction; they believe once a drug addict, always a drug addict. Some of these programs take individuals off illegal drugs and make them dependent on their drugs. At this point, the question should be asked, "How can human dignity be restored if no hope is being offered?" Many of these institutions enrich themselves by further exploitation of these vulnerable people. Hope Again Recovery Home has produced many restored individuals who have become constructive, productive members of society.

**8.4.4 *Koinonia*.** The researcher believes that life is about relationships and all else concerning individuals are mere detail, e.g. where they live, what they drive, their bank balance and what they have or don't have are all mere detail. How they relate to God and their neighbour is the leadership's focus. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and, Love your neighbour as yourself" (Luke 10:27) is one of the Scriptures that is continually communicated to the members. They are encouraged to join those individuals who are in need, without creating a hand-out environment. The employed members are encouraged to be on the look-out for employment opportunities for the unemployed. A caring and sharing environment is encouraged and fostered.

**8.4.5 *Partnerships*.** The Mount Hope leadership believes that the assignment of restoring human dignity cannot be fulfilled without forming strategic and like-minded partnerships. These partners are both local and international.

Hope Again Recovery Home's leadership join hands with their clients' caregivers, social workers and other statutory substance-abuse counselling organisations.

**8.4.6 Teaching.** The leadership regards teaching as an important strategy in restoring human dignity. Matthew 28:19-20: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and **teaching** them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" supports their stance. New converts are encouraged to attend the 101-Discovering Membership new convert's class, which take place every Sunday morning before the combined worship service. Class 201-Discovering Maturity is a follow-on study for those who have completed 101. Class 301-Discovering Ministry is the last compulsory teaching for all members. The small-life groups continue with topical teaching that normally happens once a month in life groups. Members who feel the need to further their studies of the Word of God are also encouraged to pursue advance training at appropriate institutions. Trained ministers at Mount Hope do most of the teaching. Graduates of the recovery home are mentored to follow in the same footsteps. Annual conferences are held with the specific focus of equipping the believers and also to complement the on-going leadership training programs.

## **8.5 CONCLUSION**

The missional praxis discussed in this chapter has, in so many ways, placed Mount Hope in a place of affirmation when reflecting on God's mission. However, this chapter had to stretch the conversation beyond mere reflection on God's mission into action mode regarding the same mission.

With theology helping the reflection, as well as providing the framework for action, the leadership's strategic engagement provides the nuts and bolts for the implementation of that action.

All in all, strategic missional and theological action means nothing if they don't amount to transformation which the researcher believes is the confirmation that human dignity has been restored.

## CHAPTER 9

### FINAL CONCLUSIONS

At the outset of this research, three aims were stated for this research to meet. In this final chapter, the researcher will revisit these stated aims of the research and restate the research question; review the findings of the research, and provide a final conclusion.

#### 9.1 REVISITING THE AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

- A. The very first aim of the research was to put the spotlight on the plight and challenges of township life and ministry.
- B. The second aim was to draw from the scholarly work of published academics, some of whom are mentioned by name in the introduction, answers that will logically respond to the research question: **“In a township context, how is one to minister to marginalised and outcast people in such a manner that their human dignity is restored?”**
- C. The third aim was to bring about a core social transformation, liberation, reconstruction as well as a sustainable development of faith communities that, on the one hand, will reproduce after their own kind. On the other hand, through the Holy Spirit, these communities should discern God’s will in discovering creative and new ways of dealing with the realities of brokenness, pain and suffering.

#### 9.2 REVIEWING THE FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

##### 9.2.1 The researcher’s life story and Mount Hope’s historical account

Essentially, the researcher’s life story reveals that, for a response to the Mitchell’s Plain context, the call of God, firstly, had to be responded to. In addition, the response to God’s call would imperatively have to be one of obedience and compassion.

It was also revealed that human dignity is fundamental to human existence; therefore, the effects of its lack or presence are always tangibly felt.

As observed in the micro-, meso- and macro-contexts of Mount Hope, if human dignity is removed from an individual or community, it must be restored to give validity to the reason

for people living in the context of their existence. However, in the same context, it is clear that the restoration of human dignity does not necessarily have to start with the majority.

In Mitchell's Plain, one man answered the call of God to salvation and had his human dignity restored, but, from his account, it can be witnessed how others have been drawn in to benefit in the same way as he did.

Clearly, the restoration of human dignity to the marginalised and outcast people can never be the task of one man. Therefore, the partnership between an obedient man and God, and eventually between the missional community born out of that partnership is significant in answering the research question: **“How does one minister to marginalised and outcast people in such a manner that their human dignity is restored?”**

### **9.2.2 Context that shapes identity**

In answering this research's question, this section revealed that pluralism, migration of refugees, religious fundamentalism, the HIV/Aids pandemic and a few others, when combined with a lack of a decent education, a decent livelihood, as well as economic freedom, a non-conducive context is formed. An undesirable identity develops precisely out of such a context.

However, if the context is understood, the people in the context can still be engaged in such a manner that they do not feel that anyone is making decisions for them because they are marginalised and outcast.

In answering the research question above, this section depended on the presentation of a message that will inspire the formation of a better identity.

### **9.2.3 Personal testimonies**

Often, when questions, like the research question driving this paper, are asked, the answers start and end with good theory that, in a sense, is like an aeroplane in the air that does not know how to land.

This section of case studies of individuals, upon whom the ministry at Mount Hope had impacted, has revealed that the preached Gospel must translate from Word to life.

When the message of the Gospel is preached to the broken, the effectiveness of the message must deal with brokenness in such a way that both the one who testifies and those in the audience acknowledge literal results. As per the analogy of the aeroplane, this section answers the research question by “landing the plane.”

#### **9.2.4 The normative task**

The perspective from which the research question was answered in this chapter, revealed that the foundation of any missional community’s effort to fulfil God’s mission on earth must be nothing but discernment of God’s will. In this regard, discerning the will of God would nonetheless be possible only through the involvement of the Holy Spirit.

When all is said and done, God’s will would then be for Mount Hope to become the reign of God’s representative who, like the prophets of old, would realign the people in their context with the covenant that God has made with them.

#### **9.2.5 Systems theory**

This section revealed that, in its context, systems three, four and five are Mount Hope’s dominant thinking systems. More importantly, it revealed that there is a link between the said systems, the paradigms and the context itself.

This intermarriage between the thinking systems, the paradigms and the context, will prove crucial in enabling any leader to formulate relevant strategies when answering the research question that undergirds this whole research.

#### **9.2.6 Leadership dynamics in restoring human dignity**

This section’s key approach to answering the research question, “How one must minister to marginalised and outcast people in such a manner that their human dignity is restored?” was that of giving pre-eminence to the role that leaders play in order to bring about change.

It was established that, whenever leaders take action in a situation like that in Mount Hope’s question, change must take place.

However, the leadership pursued here does not like gentiles lording it over those who are already lorded over by a vast array of factors, as well as a leadership that is Theocratic in that it works with God.

### **9.2.7 Mount Hope's missional praxis in restoring human dignity**

This section reveals how critical the strategy of doing theology is. Here, the research question is answered by a theology that is practical, relevant and missional.

It has been found that action theology that is relevant to the context, should be viewed as a verb and not a noun.

## **9.3 FINAL CONCLUSIONS**

The third aim of this research was to bring about a core social transformation, liberation, reconstruction, as well as a sustainable development of faith communities that, on the one hand, will reproduce after their own kind. On the other hand, through the Holy Spirit, these communities should discern God's will to discover creative new ways of dealing with the realities of brokenness, pain and suffering.

This aim has been confirmed firstly in Mount Hope's growth out of three original families to what it is today, as well as the formation of all forms of structures that cannot be discussed justifiably in this research.

Finally, the researcher regards the issue of strategy as key in addressing any problem, whatever it may be.

Osmer says the following from a quote he obtained from a seminar that he was conducting some years ago: "Vision is a continuous conversation to define clearly the results a group of people want to create .... The vision in congregations needs to be about more than the results a group of people want to create."

This research is not the end all of this kind of conversation; like the definition above, it has joined the ranks of a continuous conversation.

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## PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Do you have any objection in participating in this study? No/ Yes

May I record/document this interview? No/ Yes

Would you object if I use your true name in any oral or written presentations directly emanating from this research? No/ Yes

Do you grant me permission to quote from this interview? No/ Yes

### **Read carefully:**

I, the undersigned, understand that this research is intended for a study entitled “**Church planting and the restoring of human dignity in Mitchell’s Plain: The Mount Hope account**” a research by Pastor Alfonso Schilder for the Master’s degree in Practical Theology.

Subject to the conditions stated above, I herewith entrust my personal information to Pastor Alfonso Schilder to use it for the purposes of the study in all its spheres.

I understand that the use of this interview may be included in published works for academic purposes and thereto I grant my permission.

**Name and Surname:**

**Age:**

**Status:**

**Address and contact details:**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:**