

## **Vision For The Nation**

Martie du Plessis

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So many people ask if it is wise to have more children when living in South Africa. It seems that the latest trend among young people is to be sterilised even before they get married, and this is attributed to their fear of the unknown. This trend is a clear indication that many people have totally lost hope for themselves, their children and the next generation. In fact, they don't actually think about a next generation as their short-sighted perspective inhibits them to ponder so far.

Recently two factors renewed my excitement about the future for our nation, and I find myself unable to stop sharing these. A short while back I presented some seminars in Phalaborwa, where my main aim was to assist and encourage families in their educational journey. During one of these presentations I asked a quiet, young man - a farmer from the district - what he had learnt from attending the seminars. His answer to me was, "I do not only understand what my children's future will look like, I also understand that I have the ability to also know what my grandchildren's future will look like." In a short presentation of "hope-talk" and visionary influence, a young father could see into a next generation. He realised that his influence in his own children's life can even effect a next generation, that of his grandchildren. This father instantly understood his responsibility to his offspring as well as their children. I was reminded of the saying that "spearheading multiplication is not the only task expected of Christian leaders", and, in the words of M. Rush, that "there is no greater leadership challenge than the challenge to help our followers become leaders capable of training their followers to be leaders also." (Rush, *New Leader*)

Then the next incident to pique my interest was when I noticed a man sitting in the front row during the seminar, not saying a word. He looked very sceptical and resistant to be at this meeting of parents who are interested in the education and future of their children. During break time this man asked to make a booking for a consultation and said, "I need help because I have never been empowered by anybody to be a proper dad." He went home after the seminar and the next day taught his son (now 11) to use a welding machine, which was a first-time experience for both of them since his son was born. He realised for the first time in his life that he had all inside of himself that was necessary to empower his own son for the future. It was also during the consultation that this father 'heard' that "through the Holy Spirit, he was furnished with the multi-faceted and inexhaustible divine adequacy which he needed to pursue his calling as a dad according to the will of God." This life-sharing situation, equipment and training was the beginning of new hope for this family.

You might ask how I can be excited about these simple matters, as it is so unpretentious. It is precisely because of its simplicity that it becomes clear these situations are in the plan of God. For the parties directly affected by this Divine encounter (because that is what it really is), it is easy to follow as this was exactly the life that Jesus has modelled for us. Scripture and Church history are full of examples of God calling the unqualified, and qualifying them through a process that speaks of His patience, grace and Fatherly love. Jesus modelled an example where real life, with all its complexities, is the workshop for the "making of people". This direct involvement of a parent serves to increase motivation and promote a sense of responsibility and ownership. Gunter Krallman states that the model Jesus left for us was one of focusing on learning through doing, or being actively involved (*Following Jesus*, 1987).

Many of us have an "orphan spirit" and therefore do not have the capacity to lead others, especially our own children, into an understanding of the love of the Father. When we know God our Father adopted us because of His love and grace and not because of anything we did to deserve it (Romans 5:8) we will find our security in who He is, and not in what we do. This is truly amazing grace, and precisely the grace that needs to be extended to a next generation.

Our fear starts as we listen to the people around us - politicians, teachers, spiritual leaders, community leaders - talk about the future, our children, the state of education, crime, declining moral standards and the economy. Have we ever stopped to consider the economy of God? And God's blueprint for education, where He intended education as a mentoring lifestyle within the family, where character formation was the focus? Family relationships are intense and dramatic with permanent transformations taking place. This was God's great aim with the family as His institution.

We need to come back to the basics, where parents take the responsibility for their children and providing a safe place to grow in the family. Parents must reclaim their role as prime educators, where they exert influence through an avenue of relationship. We need parents making intentional time for sharing the ways of God to their children and training them how to apply these. Children who have a firm Godly worldview will in future influence the lives of thousands upon thousands of people.

On my arrival back from Phalaborwa I was greeted with the wonderful news that my daughter is pregnant with her fourth child. She is 26 and my other grandchildren are respectively 4, 2 and 1 years of age. The news of her pregnancy gave me a burning motivation to be more active in the answer for our nation. What hope do we have for a next generation of people if we are not willing to be changing agents in this generation? "One of the Master's leading intentions in the coaching of his friends was that they would in the future remember and reproduce what they had learned through their association with Him" (C.C. Manz and H.P. Sims, *Company of Heroes: Unleashing the Power of Self-Leadership*).

I bought a big map of South Africa and I jotted down on it the amazing faithful families in the country that have hope for their families – hope for education and hope for the nation. It is not a dead hope in nothing but rather an active participation in life-giving and growth towards people with Godly character that can make a difference in the future. Jesus was totally obedient to God and had a deep concern for the character development of His disciples. These that have hope are trusting God for children with good character.

The perspective I have as a person travelling the nation is not that parents are passive, but that parents have seen the light, that they have a passion for the next generation, and that they also are passionately involved in raising their own children and be supportive of other families and their children. It is not true that we are a desperate country and that there is no hope! There is a harvest coming from the seeds have been sown for over 20 years. It is a harvest made possible through home educating families, where the home-grown children have become adults with Godly influence. They now are starting to home educate their own children and witness a new generation of leaders that are walking our streets, entering the business world and influencing communities. It is a people that are willing to lay down themselves.

If there are readers without hope, make sure you get the correct inspiration from those who have hope in God and a strong conviction in their roles in the upbringing of their children as well as a dedication to be life givers. This role is not a role of exercising of power but as of empowering others.

Christian schools are a great help but unless the parents are also empowered to be the first educators, with the schools as the extension of the parents, it will still leave the parents powerless.

Dynamis empowers parents to take up their unique roles as God intended with the the dads being the visionaries (spiritual leaders) of their house hold. The fullness of this influence in essence is not in what the parents say but who they are.

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Contact Dynamis for a presentation in your community. Be a life-giver to others!