

## Remain positive

In the last article on this theme I dealt with a practical initiative that we as the general public can involve ourselves in. And that was, to take a personal stand against corruption and commit ourselves and the institutions that we control to be Unashamedly Ethical.

The idea of printing the commitment and displaying that and the logo in prominent places in our homes and places of work is to remind ourselves of what it means to have good values, ethics and live a clean and productive life.

Good news generally has a positive effect on our physical well-being, demonstrated by the popularity of the #ImStaying posts that are appearing on Facebook so regularly these days. (Philippians 4:8 puts it this way; “Summing it up friends, I’d say you will do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious – the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise not to curse…….”)

In my first article, I quoted Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom, Sir Jonathan Sacks. An article of his recommended that in order to remoralise and renew themselves, a society needs to concentrate on developing groups dedicated to social, political and educational reform as did England and America in the 1820’s

On 30 November 2017, at the South End Museum a unique event took place, facilitated by the Ikhala Trust and the Nelson Mandela Bay Church Leaders Network, represented by Transformation Christian Network (TCN).

The invitation stated the following: “Conversations about poverty and unemployment usually conjures up images of need, lack, deficits, problems, challenges, scarcity and feeling overwhelmed as the challenges seem insurmountable. However, turning our attention to what is POSSIBLE and DO-ABLE as individuals without the noose around our necks of sectors we represent – can create Magic.

Many citizens in Nelson Mandela Bay do many works of charity on a daily basis that often goes unnoticed – however our activities are not co-ordinated and this means that there are communities in the Bay that go completely unnoticed despite facing the same challenges as the ones that are supported by many.”

One of the many decisions taken at this event was the commitment to build a database of NGO’s and other faith-based charities and social business enterprises in order to promote cooperation and limit the potential for communities in NMB to go unnoticed.

Work on this database is on its way to fruition and, with the able assistance of some City Planners, it now hoped to provide a spatial view, at a touch of a button, of the whole of the resources a Metro like NMB, can provide to bring a strong connection between morality and morale.

In the meantime, the Church in the city has provided Network events where NGOs can gather to discuss mutually beneficial initiatives. The next networking event will be taking place on Wednesday 30 October and will be hosted at Joy to the Nations, Villiers Road, Walmer.

With this tool at our fingertips, we all will be better informed of the good that is happening in NMB and be in a better position to make ourselves available to serve in some capacity, with a charity which can best utilise our own gifts and resources. Or log onto Just1hr on the [www.tcn.org.za](http://www.tcn.org.za) website. JUST1HR is a vehicle to drive transformation by initiating a shift from institutions and corporations to personal involvement, promoting a spirit of volunteerism in NM Bay.

It is a call to the people of our city to be part of the Nehemiah Vision by giving JUST1HR a month. In my personal opinion, the bar is purposely set low so as to avoid the usual excuse, of “I do not have the time”. We all have a talent or resource that we can offer in your street, neighbourhood or municipal ward.

At a Nelson Mandela Bay Church Leaders Network Meeting on 10 October, the attendees were asked to prepare their thoughts on the way forward for an open discussion on “Our City is Broken - what do you suggest we do about it?”

One of the decisions taken at this meeting culminated in an open letter addressed to President Cyril Ramaphosa and Mr Mmusi Maimane regarding concern about the falling apart of Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipal Council, which letter was published on page 4 of the Herald on 11 October 2019.

People of NMB, we cannot leave it to the public or private sectors. We need to do it ourselves in communities, congregations, groups of every shape and size. We need to understand that only a society held together by a strong moral bond has any chance of succeeding in the long run.

The Nehemiah Route, a 200km trail laid out through our Metro, launched on the 4 November 2019, is an ideal way for the concerned citizens of NMB to “inspect the walls (Wards) of our city, just as Nehemiah did for Jerusalem all those years ago. (Nehemiah 2:11-18)

M D Smith, Marketplace Minister