Foresight, Systems and Transformation for Provocative Research in Media and Ministry

1   Abstract

Research in media and ministry gains deep dimensions when embedded within strategic foresight, systems thinking and transformational processes. When media is integrated within ministry, then communicating forms the essence of the interventions that address the needs of people.

The beginning of media and ministry research explores the present conditions. Once research explores alternative future scenarios, then suitable interventions can be designed to change the trajectories into the future, thus transforming the lives of individuals and communities. Final research investigations enables to understand the actual impact of the transformational initiatives.

When appropriate parameters for monitoring and evaluating the change processes are developed with future thinking and systems tools, then the effect of collaborative media and ministry initiatives can be evaluated with deeper insight.

Wholistic media and ministry research explores the various phases of ministry: (1) understanding the needs of people, (2) exploring their future contexts, (3) investigating appropriate media and ministry strategies, (3) researching suitable media ministry content and platforms, (4) investigating optimal tools for engaging with people and (5) analysing the evidences of transformation.

Developing media and ministry research involves processes of: i) defining the basic assumptions, ii) mapping out critical relationships, iii) setting up functional feedback systems, iv) understanding the compartments of resources and defining the flows of information.

Overall research in media and ministry within the context of the global church can provide wisdom that enables meaningful Kingdom growth. Provocative research looks at the wholistic context of needs, engages an integrated system of exploring the future, develops information for compelling visions, facilitates close partnerships with relevant contributors for sharing of insight, enables data for innovative solutions, provides understanding for clear strategies and identifies compelling evidence of transformative initiatives.

2   Introductory explanations

To enable doing research well, we need tools to tell a great story that is :

1. **Informed**: by past experience and future alternatives;
2. **Relevant**: right now and in the times to come;
3. **Provocative**: from past eras into the future paradigms.

Research involved gathering evidence of what has been and is happening right now, and is probing processes and structures for what is yet to come.

Through research we want to be telling God's grand story in this world!

In this process we may need to re-think ministry, and thus also to re-shape the research frameworks.

In the typical media and environment, people are so focussed on the immediate tasks at hand that they struggle to focus the longer distance future and for exploring the wider sector in which the ministry is functioning. By building trusting open relationships amongst one other a suitable environment can be prepared for grappling with the future together. The process of bringing forward thinking into the context of media and ministry is challenging, yet also inspiring and invigorating. Strategic foresight can eventually be crafted into the preferred research practices.

This document focusses of the priority of building relationships before performing research and integrating research outcomes into the ministry processes. Whilst the initial focus is specifically within the media context, the research concepts are developed with a general focus on ministry that leads towards transformation.

2.1   Defining the process of research:

The research process begins with taking data, then processing the information, and eventually communicating a valuable, meaningful and actionable message. In essence, research is about

> ***disseminating information and nurturing relationships***

As the core activity, research in a ministry context is about

> **"Telling the story of God's work, and
> where necessary using figures and words"**

The tools of foresight and systems then help expand the richness of this story being told.

2.2   Why is foresight and systems thinking so critical for research of transformational initiatives?

When we begin exploring, we look back and ask, "Where have we been?". Then we look at our present context to ask, "Where are we now?". Ultimately we look at the future to explore, "Where might we be?" Foresight and systems thinking play a key role in these explorations:

1. Our past assumptions of constant environments are no longer valid and accurate;
2. Our future contexts will be quite different to what we are experiencing right now;
3. By just watching the present, we do not anticipate far enough ahead;
4. By only considering linear relationships we cannot anticipate the complexities of systems;
5. Relationships provide multiple feedback loops, changes are non-linear, so complex systems of exploring the future are needed;

6. We can influence the future, yet need to be able to track and monitor how the future is changing, as we become part of God's creative influence;
7. We need to become capable and willing to personally undergo transformational deep change of core assumptions;
8. We need to become open to exploring substantial long-term change;
9. We need to become competent for developing big compelling inspiring visions;
10. We need to become able to discern God's redemptive journeys and experiences in this world.

Through studying the wider environmental context and utilising tools for exploring the future, we become able and equipped in obtaining the knowledge and experience for future-ready ministry.

2.3 Acknowledgements

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Science fiction movies provide the general public with very graphic images and experiences of possibly futures. Many of these images are strongly dystrophic story lines which paint a bleak picture of the future. The message of the Bible urges us to move towards the future with hope, thinking back of to the heroes of the past and fixing our vision on Jesus as the desired motivation for the way ahead:

> *"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." (Hebrews 12:1-3, NIV)*

As professionals working in the media we are challenged to keep going and not be discouraged. Even when we become weak, we are urged to become strong again and move on:

> *"Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. 'Make level paths for your feet,' so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed." (Hebrews 12:12-13, NIV)*

In the light of increasing uncertainty on a global scale generally and in the media environment specifically, media organisations are encouraged to be courageous so that hurting and hopeless people would be healed and regain new vision through the media initiatives.

3.1   Purpose
Developing a futures paradigm as a foundation for engaging media and ministry for research in Africa.

3.2   Outcome
Media and ministries research utilises foresight tools to explore the system of their overall context for implementing strategies that transform the lives of individuals and communities.

3.2.1   Impact of a future focus on the strategic focus of a media organisation
The organisation will transition from addressing only the challenges of the present to addressing also the ministry issues of the future. By anticipating which key problems will emerge, the leaders can act on the future issues to prevent them from becoming reality. On the other side, some challenges are approaching that cannot be prevented. In this case, an organisation can prepare even for these difficult aspects of the future.

The ultimately challenge for an organisation is to tackle the **problems of the future** by identifying the **leverage points** for **interventions**. Then **sustainable changes** can be **implemented** that can reduce the **impact of these problems** of the future. Further details about implementing concepts of future thinking in media are illustrated in the **Appendix *1*** *"Using foresight principles for media and ministry professionals"*. These tools can help for researching the past, present and the future.

3.2.2   Achievements within the outcome

When an organisation becomes flexible for implementing future thinking in its daily life, people will be able to more beyond their existing paths and paradigms. They would develop skills to:

- think beyond their existing challenges;
- continuously focus hard on understanding their environment;
- define the key issues and their relationships;
- be working cohesively to endorse each other's skills;
- find ways to go beyond linear extrapolations into complex relationships;
- think beyond their conventional media and ministry concepts towards innovative communication tools.

As this approach is woven into research, then new processes can help to develop:

- specific information;
- investigative tools;
- insightful experiences;
- transformative paradigms;
- enabling monitoring information as it emerges;
- telling God's story well.

These perspectives are then able to shape the research processes.

3.3   Why would media and ministry organisation be future-oriented in their research perspectives?

In past eras much planning was done by developing extensive strategies and systematic implementation plans. The recent generations addressed issues rationally, which has not delivered the desired results. Such strategies with linear thinking no longer work effectively in a transient and flexible world. The world has become much more complex than what which previous generations had experienced, so the conventional planning concepts cannot be used confidently any more. The pace of change has increased so significantly that the challenges of the past cannot be addressed with the strategies of the past.

When media and ministry practitioners begin understanding the development of their sector clearly they can craft a **compelling shared vision** for the **desired future**. This image can become the guiding star that will attract others into the future and guide the necessary strategies to make the vision reality.

Being ready and nimble

Individuals in an organisation that are informed about the world around them will be better equipped to respond to changes before they occur. They will be able to anticipate new developments that impact their sector and organisation. They will also be able to act more quickly.

Being niche focussed within the interlinked whole

When a sector is explored with systems thinking, a better understanding is obtained about the most important areas for impact. In addition, key leverage points can be defined that would be able to have high power to effect enduring change. With this paradigm, leaders will be able to narrow their effort on small niches in their sector to facilitate the types of desired transformation.

Being collaboration-minded

The world is much more interconnected than it ever has been before. By exploring and learning together and discovering the bigger picture of the context, people will appreciate the large scope

and complexity of today's issues. This will motivate them to work together to find solutions with a number of organisations complementing one another.

Being long-term oriented

When futurists envisage the long-term future over 15 to 30 years, the most important fundamental driving aspects of change become important. Then the change agents will be able to move beyond quick-fix solutions towards striving to achieve deep-rooted long-term impact.

When a media or ministry organisation fails to be future-oriented, the work with society can be affected in a number of ways. The organisation easily falls into the trap of addressing a whole range of immediate issues that all look important, but only have impact in the short term. Such an organisation could realise one day that all their effort has not yielded any long term impact. This organisation can be surprised by changes that impact their projects, can be made irrelevant by the shifting needs of their customers, or can be unprepared when new technologies and solutions appear in their market. Such an organisation that is blind to the long-term future could fail to identify the really important aspects of their sector and thus be preoccupied with trivial activities. Since they may not appreciate the scope of the problems, they may be tempted to want to do everything themselves and thus minimise the impact they could be having through collaboration. Thus a short-term focussed organisation will have a much smaller ability to cope with the relevant challenges of the future. The **Appendix 2** *"Major trends shaping the future of media ministry"* provides expanded details of trends that affect the future significantly. When media and ministry organisations guide their interventions within the framework of major interconnected trends, their work can become increasingly impactful and transformational in the long term.

4   The active futuring process

As a media ministry organisation, the work so easily drifts into the tyranny of the urgent. Often groups struggle to define the key issues the organisation and its people should be concerned about. The beginning of futures work is becoming willing to explore the developments within the media and ministry contexts. Initially small teams of key people can work together to explore media futures. As their learning matures, they can contribute significant perspectives about the future to the global media ministry networks.

Learning together about the future can best be done with three levels of leaders in the network:

Three levels of leaders	Interacting styles	Communicating information	Participative engagements
1. global leaders and international ministry directors	inspiring and detailed information	academic articles	**Presentations:** challenging and compelling with the ability for feedback and commitments
2. departmental and national leaders	medium-level topics with some detail	popular articles	**Workshops:** significant input with deep interaction to craft info.
3. the broad group of network partners	clear brief information	summarised topics	**Brief input:** short communication with interactive applications.

As various teams within the organisation work together to explore the future, they will benefit by interacting in different ways with each other. While the *senior leaders* will benefit from compelling input to win their endorsement and support, the *middle leaders* would be able to mature through more intense interaction where they can contribute. Condensed communication with the network of partners will enable wide interaction with the future of media material.

4.1 Stability amidst constant changes

When so much in the world is changing at an increasing rate, people can become very insecure and despondent about the future. One of the biblical authors wrote about the incredible change that the world will be experiencing through a shaking of the heavens and the earth:

> *"See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, 'Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.' The words 'once more' indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our "God is a consuming fire." (Hebrews 12:25-29, NIV)*

The unchanging aspect in history is the unshakable kingdom of God, which provides Christian media professionals with an enduring hope that goes beyond the messy instabilities of the flexible media landscape. This kingdom creates hope beyond the challenges and negative news that pervades the present world.

4.2 Moving beyond the existing paradigms towards future-ready research

In media ministry that has already worked for a long period of multiple generations there is a deep challenge to continue doing the same media work as before. Thus the work can easily continue along the same perspectives with the existing frames of reference.

At a previous media conference in Durban, I was sitting outside the hotel late at night in the cool air listening to the constant rolling of the distant ocean waves. I was looking up at the sky where I could only see the bright stars of the Southern Cross, but nothing else. Suddenly the hotel lights went out. All the bright floodlights were gone. As my eyes adjusted to the darkness, the myriad of faint stars emerged in the clear sky above. These little lights were used by the explorers of the past to guide them across the vast oceans of this world into distant countries. Do the faint signals in the world around us also provide pointers towards the direction towards the desired future? Amidst the busy and rushing lifestyle with the high levels of noise around us we often cannot discern these weak signals. A tremendous help is to be able to take a step back, look at the overall picture and evaluate:

- What can we actually observe in the world around us?
- What faint relationships are there between all these signals?
- What can we learn from these insights?

This is the essence of deep research that enables insight into significant ministry.

Once our understanding of the environment has deepened we can begin asking probing questions about our inner frameworks:

- What are the underlying assumptions for us to make an impact and be successful?
- What has changed over time that we have not acknowledged?
- How are we really working with each other – organisationally, within networks, and also globally?

And then to move on to ask:
- ➢ How should we be changing our basic assumptions of the world around us?
- ➢ Where do we need to work differently?

With a deepening appreciation of the deeper issues the frameworks of our worldviews can be shaping for becoming ready to read and move with the weak signals and connections that we observe in the world around us.

5   Challenging call to action for building foresight and systems thinking into research

Teams within media and ministry organisation can begin by exploring the impact of major global trends on the ministry context. Then they can discuss how these trends will change the environment in which the organisation is aiming to impact the lives of people. Finally they can explore what type of actions would be needed to either avoid the consequences of the major trends, or to move to utilise the impact the trends as a benefit. While exploring the major forces, team members can discover the scope of these forces, and became aware of the need for responding appropriately. In the light of dramatic changes in the ministry context, media and ministry organisations as a whole are challenged to consider steps of action for becoming ready to address the future:

A. Exploring the context
1. Begin the futures research with endorsement and support from the senior leadership;
2. Commission work groups with focussed foresight assignments on the most important issues for the media ministry;
3. Guided interactive discussion groups in sharing their experience towards designated topics;
4. Discover hidden biases that shaping existing thinking and processes in research; and
5. Explore events that are unlikely to occur, but would have dramatic unexpected consequences in the context of ministry research.

B. Stretching the mind
1. Consider developing a wider horizon of thinking through extended research;
2. Find ways to move beyond linear strategic thinking into flexible adaptive processes;
3. Gain insight for coping with an increasingly complex environment.

C. Equipping each other
1. Utilise foresight tools for developing futuring skills;
2. Shape the organisational social dynamics of the media ministry to keep teams motivated;
3. Help the media network to grow by building appropriate organisational growth curves;
4. Preparing technical aspects to assist exploring the future:
   - o **Exploration systems** to systematically explore issues;
   - o **Information systems** to capture and retrieve relevant information for gaining insight; and
   - o **Collaboration systems** to enable teams to work together effectively.

1. Encourage wide participative conversations amongst teams to visualisation the preferred future impact of media ministry;
2. Craft details of the vision;
3. Encourage continuous input into the vision;
4. Develop stories of the desired impact of the media ministry throughout Africa and wider;
5. Promote the desired vision to come alive within the organisation;
6. Share the vision beyond the organisational boundaries into the media and ministry networks.

1. Provide stretching assignments to focus teams for exploring issues of the future into a deeper level;
2. Anticipate radical deep-rooted change that would transform the ministry sectors and the media and ministry organisation;
3. Implement a collaborative processes for tackling the key issues together as multi-functional teams;
4. Craft space and freedom to fail for stimulating increase innovation and invention;

These calls to action can be a starting point towards a common journey into the future for understanding the landscape, discerning the direction and walking the road into the preferred direction within research perspectives.

6   How do we then integrate various time paradigms into research?

There are significant alternatives in how we approach the media and ministry research:

Past paradigms *are based on:* simple, intentional, focussed, solid

Present paradigms *might shift to:* inharmonious, disjointed, contrasting, uncertain, raw, loose

Future paradigms *could look like:* spreading, embracing, empowering, innovative, experimental

As we move forward we may be challenged to adjust expectations and risk new realities to experience the alternative paradigms of exploring and understanding the context of our ministry environments in which we desire to develop initiatives.

Why does research connect with various facets of ministry?

- Helps to develop frameworks;
- living outside the box;
- enable people to think beyond the present and into the future;
- consider processes and structures outside the status quo;
- challenging thinking with new and relevant insights.

So often research is only utilised to affirm existing assumptions and thinking frameworks, whilst research should actually move forward with open minds, promoting thinking, stimulating to explore, nurturing innovation.

Also research should be able to people to consider alternatives, to explore the relevance of their activities, inspired by the ministry priorities of this world.

Research should not only obtain and contribute figures that endorse the present ministry, but should equip people to explore where ministry could be and should be at.

Research should be the information gateway that stimulates and inspires relevant impactful transformational sustainable ministry as an expression of the love of God in this world working within and through the lives of His people.

Research should be telling the story of God in this world, past, present and future, here and there and everywhere.

Research should be skills acquirable and transferrable by everyone being involved in ministry; not only by research experts or institutions.

7   Provocative paradigms for research

On the way forward into research, these paradigms can enable a provocative perspective of exploring ministry and media:

1. **Think far ahead:**
   into the 15-30 year future with trends, alternative scenarios, preferred futures;
2. **Think wide in whole systems:**
   explore influences, leverage points, feedback from loops;
3. **Think relationships:**
   involve individual and teams before ministry research output;
4. **Think communities:**
   focus on shaping people within connected groups for providing deeper research insight;
5. **Think experimental:**
   developing information by testing hypothesis and assumptions;
6. **Think integrative:**
   integrating research into every facet of ministry;
7. **Think change-agents:**
   equipping and mobilising people who can implement change monitored by research;
8. **Think transformation:**
   move beyond ministry intervention addressing needs to transformed contexts shaping root causes;
9. **Think multiplication:**
   equipping teams that can move beyond and elsewhere;
   considering organisational partnerships, networks, movements to multiple transformation;
10. **Think emotionally, cognitively and spiritually:**
    utilise all human faculties to understand, learn, explore and adapt through research.

These ten paradigms can inspire researchers amongst one another, and provoke ministry and media leaders in their journeys of implementing interventions that are guided through research.

8   Conclusion

Researchers in the media and ministry context have the honour and opportunity to be:
Watching God at work in this world!

Then researchers can explore together where God is working around them, and where God is working in others way beyond and then:

- ***equip other individuals and teams to research where God is working: in the past, the present and the future.***

Eventually other people can be inspired and released to develop communities who are gathering, processing and communicating the stories of how God is working in the world.

The foundations for ministry research can follow these phases to:

- Explore fundamental assumptions;
- Develop alternative research frameworks;
- Explore relevant sector;
- Develop models for ministry;
- Study the possible futures;
- Define what needs to be monitored;
- Develop metrics for monitoring past, the present and the emerging future; and finally
- Tell the elements of God's Grand Story.

Where would media and ministry researchers move to from here?
Future-orientated media and ministry research is a journey through

1. personal transformation,
2. organisational re-invention and
3. deepening social relationships.

While many futures tools can be utilised to explore relevant facets of the future, the re-orientation with new insight is only possible within the context of a flexible mind-set for re-shaping a paradigm towards tomorrow's world.

Would media and ministry organisations dare stay where they are positioned now? The coming challenges are so immense that stationary organisations will unlikely remain relevant or be able to survive. The future needs in society are so demanding that significant focussed help is needed on all fronts. Thus media and ministry organisations will need a narrow purposeful focus in their key directions for making specific impact, whilst keeping the wider integrated environment in view.

The futures are exciting! Will they also be challenging? Of course they will be! Yet the opportunities for positive change will be greater than ever before for making a difference on the direction in which this world and its people are moving. Those who make impact will be those who are willing to begin to explore, to learn, to connect, to experiment, to adjust and then to transform. Those who are continuously exploring the future and shaping relevant paradigms in the overall systems will be informed to tell the grand future story of God in this world.

9 Appendix 1: Using foresight principles for media and ministry professionals

A number of authors have provided foundational resources to help organisations in the journey into exploring the future. Cornish (2005) provided a substantial overview of "futuring" that can be applied into any context. The skill of exploring the future is a multi-faceted and integrated approach, as described by the six processes of Bishop and Hines (2006):

1. **Framing**: clearly identifying the problems and identifying the scope of the issue
2. **Scanning**: exploring what is happening in the overall landscape of the sector and understanding the key trends;
3. **Forecasting**: studying the various possibilities of the future, differentiating between the expected future and alternative futures;
4. **Visioning**: defining the preferred future in a compelling way for an organisation or a project;
5. **Planning**: sketching out the possible road towards creating the desired future
6. **Acting**: regularly and continuously translating the foresight into practical action.

For exploring the future of media, Deuze (2011) has worked extensively to help guide how media work should be managed in the future. Media has so much infiltrated society that not only the media, but even society itself has become networked (van Dijk, 2012). Canton (2006) explored the extreme future in which media could become so advanced and inter-connected that the computer networks might gain their own consciousness.

Dixon (1998) has helped to map out six major global trends that can be used to map out various influences on the media environment. As a ministry organization, TWR focusses on the needs of people by using missionary tools. Barrett, Johnson, Guidry, & Crossing (2001) explored world Christian trends from AD 30 until AD 2200 to help leaders become aware of a variety of key issues.

Guthrie (2000) provided an overview of the challenges that faces missions in the years to come.

In *Future Files: A History of the Next 50 Years*, Watson (2007) has sketched out a variety of changes that media will be facing. Lanier (2010) has gone further to challenge people that there is life beyond engaging with media gadgets continuously. Yet Watson (2010) showed how the digital media age is affecting the way people think and act.

Essentially the process of becoming ready for the future will require deep change (Quinn, 1996), both individually and organizationally, for becoming able to move beyond past paradigms. Various strategic processes and organizational structures can be utilized, yet initially organizations will be wise to address their whole context using systems thinking (Meadows, & Wright, 2008)

Alex McManus challenges leaders that, "Creating the future doesn't begin with a plan. It begins with a dream." (via www.facebook.com/MFutures) In past eras much planning was done by developing extensive strategies and implementation plans. These linear preparation and implementation strategies no longer work effectively in a transient and flexible world. The futuring process begins with understanding the relevant sectors and their future as clearly as possible and then developing a compelling shared vision for the desired future. This image can become the guiding star that will attract people into the future and can guide the necessary strategies that will eventually make the vision become reality.

10 Appendix 2: Major trends shaping the future of media and ministry in Africa

How major developments shape media and ministry in the years to come for shaping areas for focussed research.

10.1 Media impacting the lives of people

The focus of media and ministry is to transform individual lives and then to impact communities through the power of the Gospel. Media functions as a communication tool within the context of human relationships. Thus the future of humans has significant influence on how media interventions will be either relevant or insignificant to people. Various major trends will shape how the future of Africa will emerge.

10.2 Major dynamics impacting media trends

In many facets of life the level of change are increasing. Major trends are shaped by a number of smaller developments working together to modify the human experience. A media ministry aims to shape effective media strategies within the context of these major trends.

1. Growing populations

For the next 20 years the population explosion in Africa will continue at the fast present rates. The present population pyramid shapes with a large youth bulge, particularly in West-, Central- and East Africa, determine the substantial increase of the African population. A continent of Africa with many more people without a significantly increase in resources will impact all issues of societies. Within this context of changing population dynamics media and ministry can communicate a significant message of hope.

2. Changing environments

The effect of climate change on the sensitive ecosystems in Africa is causing increased desertification in large areas. Food generation, access to water and basic living conditions are becoming increasingly challenging. These real life challenges can be addressing in collaborative ministry initiatives, where media can provide insight for coping.

3. Reshaping social contexts

In Africa the social fabric is shifting in major ways. Communities are becoming increasingly urban and various cultures are intermingling with each other, thereby losing the social community structures that bonded people together in traditional rural settings. In this changing context the increasing pressures with health, diseases, food and income challenge the social infrastructure. Ministry interventions of the futures with wholistic thinking can work together in transforming societies.

4. Developing communication technology

Over recent years the adoption of new communication technologies has been much faster in Africa than in other regions, yet the technological networks still need major expanding. In the more remote areas communication will still be challenging for a significant period. Media strategies for the future will need to be able to function well within limited access to technology, as well as utilising the fast development towards newer communication channels.

5. Impacting economies

International corporates have been providing significant employment opportunities, yet microenterprises are often shaping the financial structure of African communities. Ministry that

aims to touch the heart of communities needs to interact with the financial engines that enable people to move from surviving to thriving.

6. Adjusting worldviews

Even though some African communities have remained stable over time, many people are changing from traditional to modern and even to post-modern worldviews. The influence of globalisation is to expose people in Africa to the thought patterns of cultures from other regions, particularly the western humanistic worldviews as portrayed in mainstream media. Emerging leaders that develop a biblical worldview with a serving attitude can adjust the thinking in their communities. Media interactions have the ability to significantly shape worldviews over time by communicating compelling inspirational messages.

10.3 Impact on the lives of people

These six major areas of change will shape the context in which media and ministry strives to impact the people of Africa. While some trends move in very clear directions, others are highly uncertain. As various churches and organisations link together to understand these significant changes, they can become more intentional in working together within the changing landscape to nurture societies in which people experience the hope and love of the Christian Gospel.

Media professionals that collaborate with ministries on the ground can generate alternative futures that differ significantly from the futures that are expected to emerge from existing trends. The future environment of the people of Africa can be improved by media ministries that communicate hope and life within the diverse communities on the continent.

11 References for further exploration

Many valuable resources in books, websites and publications are available. Various tools and guidelines are helpful in exploring the future and systems within ministry research. Major resources are presented with these helpful categories:

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