

I visited the Hope Outreach Ministries for everyone located in 333 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Newark NJ where Darren Gulston is the Pastor. Darren Gulston joined his father Apostle Kerry Gulston in ministry in 1994. Before Apostle Gulston passed away he gave his blessings to his son Pastor Darren Gulston to start Hope Outreach Ministries for Everyone in 2018. Pastor Darren purposes to journey with people as they come to Christ and to equip the children of God by introducing them to His transforming power. They partner with New Light Church World Outreach and Worship Center in TX and 1<sup>st</sup> Zion Hill Missionary Baptist Church in Newark, NJ. They used to partner with Genesis Missionary Baptist Church and currently occupy the building. Their collective goal is that they seek to reach out to people and show the love of Christ to everyone.

They reach out to the community in various ways and attempt to appeal to the neighborhood by having back to school, Christmas, Thanksgiving and Easter Events. They desire that all people come to God and understand what it means to be saved and born again. The Ministry engages the neighborhood by hosting outings to amusement parks and other events and they offer counseling free of charge to the community.

Their philosophy is based on faith in Jesus Christ (as stated) and believing God to do what you want him to do. Pastor believes that a person should think big and believe God for it and it will come to pass. Although that can be true that is not the basis of the Gospel of Christ. So I believe in this sense they miss the mark when it comes to how they introduce people to the Gospel of Christ, which in turn can lead people down the wrong path in terms of what they believe God for.

Their theology is based on their belief in the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. I attended their service a few times and they speak about Christ the redemption by the blood and the forgiveness of sins it appears that they speak more about giving

than anything else. The few times that I attended I felt a little confused due to not understanding what the purpose of the message was. Each week I attended they had a mini sermon for about 20 minutes on the purpose for tithing and giving. The first week I went I thought that maybe it was something they did maybe once a month or ever so often. However, they do this at every service and this is in addition to the main message (Sermon) given by the Pastor or another Minister / Pastor. The Congregation is small being that their ministry is new. They are located in South Newark, NJ and the neighborhood is a little dangerous with reckless driving and shootings.

The Model that they portray is faith and wealth which is in line with the Prosperity Gospel. Although they preach the love of Christ, they weigh in heavily on the thought of wealth and health being made better or increased because of a person's faith. We all need faith in order to become better people, but faith without works is dead and there are some underlying issues that may not allow a person to gain wealth properly and may even put people in more of a bind.

In the section where they talk about the importance of tithing it appears as if they are trying to appeal to the audience to give money. What was a little offensive to me was this went on for about 20 minutes, maybe a little more and the tone was a little condescending to me. After the mini sermon about tithing and giving, there was more on money in the main message. If I could have recorded it, I would have. It was so bad for me to hear that I left out of the sanctuary the last times I went. Please don't get me wrong, we definitely need money to fund ministry and it is talked about in the bible. I believe that teaching about tithing is needed and we need to be practical in our teaching, but my thinking is maybe to speak about discipleship, tithing, giving among other things in another forum. Such as, bible study, discipleship class, new members class and even give classes on money management. However, the teaching of tithing should not come across the pulpit every Sunday as a mini sermon. After I went there a few times and noticed that

it was done at each service I asked how often they speak about tithes in this manner and it was stated that they do that every Sunday.

I will say that I don't know the financial situation of the church, but I do know that the Pastor has a Real Estate Agency which is doing well and has been in operation for over 20 years. This Agency serves Essex County and really works with people to get them into homes. I truly believe that the pastor means well and has no ill intentions for the people of God. I interviewed the Pastor of the church and I asked him boldly why he speaks so much about money, as a mini sermon and in his message and the Pastor says that he wants people to get the message that it is by their faith that they can receive if they believe.

In speaking to him about training as it pertains to reaching out to the poor, the church is not established in that area. They would like to start a food pantry / soup kitchen and be able to go out into the community to reach the lost, hungry, and homeless. Pastor stated that one of the reasons that he started working in real estate was that a lot of black and brown people were not educated in the purpose of purchasing homes and that some people were afraid to invest in housing due to how some of us were being treated. Pastor stated that he wants Newark to thrive as well as the surrounding neighborhoods. Pastor speaks in a matter-of-fact tone the sounds a little condescending to some and sounded off to me.

While interviewing the Pastor, I noticed that he had all the right answers in regard to wanting to reach out to the community. It appears that he doesn't have the people to back him up and although he has some youth, there is a big difference in age from the oldest child to the youngest. He appears to want to appeal to the neighborhood and in doing so he misses the opportunity to teach about the ministry of Christ. They build relationships but they build them around financial gain and not Christ salvation.