*Ideally, practical theology is the concrete collaboration of academics (research and method), theology and the practice of a faith community.*

The Tanzanian runner (Simon) who held the running record represents the practical theologian in this video.  Simon is approached by a European endurance runner (Kilian Jornet) to help him break the record.  Simon has grown up running Mt. Kilimanjaro and has studied the ways of the mountain - its nature, its topography.  But the record holder brings more than physical knowledge of the mountain, he imparts the spiritual understanding of the mountain - he acts as a 'living web.'  Jornet ask him, "What is the spirit of the mountain?" This question lends Simon (the theologian) the chance to connect the task of breaking the record to the Tanzania people's normative task of what the mountain symbolizes spiritually- the people's theological perspective.  Simon comments that he wants to share the things he sees everyday (on the mountain) and does not want anyone to miss that.  This is a metaphor of the responsibility of the practical theologian to direct the congregation to what they should be looking for in their work as a church. Guiding them to the truths that we profess.  The record holder shares his spiritual understanding with Jornet.  For Simon the goal is more than defeating his record.

Secondly, there is a strong sense of a pragmatic relationship between Jornet, Simon and the community.  The record holder next takes a very practical approach to helping Jornet break the record. The ascent to the mountain peak creates necessary job opportunities for the community (video 5:42). Simon emphasizes the necessity of community to accomplish ones dreams.  I see these people as the church and our neighbors.  The goals of the church cannot be accomplished in a vacuum just as Jornet cannot reach the top of the mountain in record speed without the Tanzanian community, the experiences and observations of Simon, and the acknowledgment of God living and moving on the mountain.

The fact that Simon is willing to share his fame with Jornet represents what practical theologians should strive to impart – shared ideas, knowledge, successful research methods and a common reverence to Christ.  Like Simon, we share these things so that others can manifest Christ's work in the world.  The record holder displays profoundly, the task of Pragmatic (Servant-Leadership). Osmer states,

"Leaders gain power by empowering others" (198).

I also see the respect of disciplinary integration in this piece.  The team of runners brings physicians, cooks, guides, and musicians along the quest to accompany Jornet.  In *Prelude to Practical Theology* Stevenson-Moessner writes,

"Without such an articulation of the interplay and interdependence among the disciplines, what theological institutions.... offer will be at best is a creative collection and combination of courses" (5).

The practical activity of worship is displayed in the video. Don E. Saliers in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology* says,

“Worship is the human response to the mystery of God’s being and self-communication. Whether communal (liturgical) or individual (devotional), worship is not a theory about God and the world, but a set of practices, experiences and fundamental dispositions toward what is deemed most sacred” (287).

We see this played out during the rest periods of the ascent when the crew leads the diverse group of climbers into a form of worship with song and simple rhythmic clapping.

Jornet, the recipient of this feat, employs Osmer's descriptive-empirical task of gathering information about the goal.  He is immersed in the act of participant observation, mostly gathering practical tools as he does trial runs with the record holder.

What struck me as exemplary of practical theology is the reality that even when these tasks are in play there still lurks the struggle.  In fact, it is only when churches (communities) courageously embark on a climb that they find the unpredictable environment of their own mountains and the altitude ahead that cause them to stumble.

Despite all the preparation, we see when Jornet sets out to break the record he stumbles and gasps for air as he runs. However, notice that he is not alone. Even though it is only he who can break the record, African and European support crews strategically placed around the mountain flank Jornet. As our churches stumble we are to remind them that we are never alone, by the cross and the people of God, we are flanked with a cloud of saints. As practical theologians we are called to make sure that our support crews are strategically, as well as, divinely placed.

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