Conference a significant milestone for Stellenbosch

I t is with welcome alumnus Akerman Patrick Swart’s, the Executive Mason, described the conference as a very significant milestone in the history of Stellenbosch, and in the relationship between the Municipality and the University – which, through joint agreement, “have committed ourselves to chartering a new future course for a town that shares both a colonial and apartheid past.”

This commitment has been demonstrated in a remarkable show of understanding aimed at Reinventing Stellenbosch – creating a conducive environment with space for all the people in Stellenbosch in that solution to the current challenges currently confronting us,” he added.

One challenge, addressed at this conference, is “What should hold us together in Stellenbosch?” And is possible for us all to resolve this town to unite behind and for a common cause,” said Alderman Swartz.

“Now, we are to the most haunted province; because of the fact that it’s the oldest settled province in modern history. The centre of the province, the area, is a centre of production for some of the best wines in the world. It is also home to some of the most beautiful landscapes in the world. But it is also home to some of the most challenging issues currently facing the country. How do we make sense of this contradiction? How do we reconcile the vast differences in wealth and opportunity that exist within a country?”

One of the key insights from this conference is the recognition that there is no single solution to the challenges facing Stellenbosch. It is a complex issue that requires a multi-stakeholder approach. The conference brought together local government, the University, the local community, and various stakeholders to discuss how they can work together to address the challenges facing the town.

Conference Chairperson, the Honourable Mrs. Swart’s, introduced several speakers who shared their insights on various aspects of the conference. One of the highlights of the conference was the keynote address by Dr. Mamphela Ramphele, a former political activist and human development expert.

We can model success for Africa

Dr. Mamphela Ramphele, a former managing director in human development at the World Bank in Washington, qualified as a medical doctor, obtained a doctorate in social anthropology and (as the University of Cape Town) became South Africa’s first female vice-chancellor. She grew up in what is now the Limpopo Province, where she had to continue her medical outreach work when she was banned from the Eastern Cape because of her political activities. Dr. Ramphele has authored a number of books and serves on the boards of several top companies.

“South Africa shows up to its best when we give ourselves time to converse about our hopes, our fears, and our aspirations for our country,” she said at the Social Cohesion Conference in Stellenbosch. “I couldn’t imagine a better way for Russell [Prof Botman] to establish a foothold for his leadership of this great institution by doing anything other than what we are doing today,” she said.
We should celebrate our history of mix

Dr Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and Prof Russell Boston

We need to start conversations to look at our strengths, our weaknesses, and in celebrating our strengths we will have the courage to address our weaknesses.

Our greatest strength is being an African country that is truly unique...
I am honoured to speak here today, especially to speak after one of the most important people of the past, My Lord Chief Justice Frans Baleni. I will recall that I used to call most great men among the oma ruler of this country who all gave in pursuit of our common humanity – such as Brian Fisher, Beyers Naude and Anton Lembede.

In early July, I received an email on behalf of Professor Brian requesting me to come and speak at this day conference around the thematic theme of talking about the role for an industry of hope. I am still quite naive what ghosts are.

Furthermore, it was suggested that the title for my speech might be:  ‘Terrence, interrupted’ not because I focused on the african spirit and view of humanity.

The question I ask myself is what is God’s desire for South Africa? What will enable the realisation of that dream?

What is your dream for South Africa? What kind of country, would you like your children and grandchild-

do to some of us who know all this, it is clearly time to exorcise the past and lay ghosts to rest for eni-
tive theme of laying ghosts to rest for grieving his beloved daughter, Sara’s

There was a very dark day in our the title for my speech might be: ready to explode. Even whilst deeply wherc. Very tragically, one of the day had run out and it was now five

One of my favourite organisations is a very small one, 5% Fund for Peaceful Development. A group of people who felt that our history was a hope-losing, a history of violence and atroci-ty, that we had not done what we should, and who set the goal to do – and of all with a story to tell – to help people drowning in the sea of fe-

There was a very dark day in our country. Because of the xenophobic and anti-immigrant events of September 11, 2001 – despite the clamour for war and revenge – said “However, nevertheless”, no do believe in revenge. You may not go to war in the name of our own love. You can bring forgiveness to persons without forgiveness and thereby create a world in which to be loved and feared.

After I returned in South Africa to live in Johannesburg and its suburbs, the first thing which struck me was that there were no multicultural festivals. Stig Reuter’s book, Theodor, for example, was left on the shelf and things were not quite the same. Several years ago, I was invited to speak at a multicultural festival in Cape Town, dedicated his speech to the birth of this university?

FATHER MICHAEL LAPILEY, director of the Institute for Healing of Memories in Cape Town, dedicated his speech to the women and men of Stellenbosch who were slaves and to all who fought against slavery. Lapley, who was banned by the SA government in 1976, then became chaplain to the banned ANC in Lusaka, Zambia – where he learned that he was on the SA government’s hit list. That was only in April 1990, three months after Nelson Mandela’s release from prison.

Lapley received a letter bomb in the post, hidden inside the pages of two religious magazines that had been posted from South Africa. In the bomb blast he lost both hands and an eye and his eardrums shattered.

All of us have been shaped by all that happened to our parents and grandparents, and somebody’s family of one of you – the young people of today – looks both to the future and tomorrow. There is no way to kill each other in the way that we did – but are you living in psychological ghettos reproducing old prejudices and outdated tendencies based on fear and hate. If we learn not to fear differences, we are creating new identities, we are creating new communities, African, as an human being? To cele-

What is it that enables people, as in the country of my birth, in the 19th century? It was such a joyful time. So much beauty. Coloured and black people mixed with the refugees. A thousand people present but no white people.

What is it that enables people, as people for ever – yes, an evil system, but “However, nevertheless”, each of us capable of being both perpetrator and victim. Today we are trying to draw a line. But do you think this is a line we can cross?

Do we no longer know who we are? Do we no longer have a country? Do we no longer hear the echoes of the past?

One of my favourite organisations is a very small one, 5% Fund for Peaceful Development. A group of people who felt that our history was a hope-losing, a history of violence and atrocities, that we had not done what we should, and who set the goal to do – and of all with a story to tell – to help people drowning in the sea of false hope.

Some years before that, Harnosand was a town in the north of Sweden. It was then, a few minutes to midnight when the church bells were ringing. The church was full. A very dark day in our country. Because of the xenophobic and anti-immigrant events of September 11, 2001 – despite the clamour for war and revenge – said “However, nevertheless”, no do believe in revenge. You may not go to war in the name of our own love. You can bring forgiveness to persons without forgiveness and thereby create a world in which to be loved and feared.

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What is it that enables people, as
Social cohesion turns the house into a home

PROF RÚALPH BOTHA is Rector and Vice-Chancellor at Stellenbosch University. His public policies include: executive chairperson of the Ecumenical Foundation of South Africa (EFS), co-chairperson of the SA Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) and Cape Teacher’s Professional Association (CPTA), as well as research advisor to the general secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. He obtained a doctorate in theology at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) where he taught prior to joining SU. He founded the Beyers Naude Centre for Public Theology at SU. An American citizen, Milwaukee, honoured him for his contribution to justice and humanity.

W hat is often forgotten is that social cohesion is about people living their lives as brothers and sisters. It is about understanding that the recognition that we are all equal. It is about understanding that none of us is above the other. It is about understanding that we all share the same rights and privileges.

Social cohesion is the glue that binds the people so that all of them would call the same place home. Home is where they share warmth, love, calamities, challenges, loss and laughter.

Social cohesion turns the house into a home

Social cohesion requires a much more perfect and solid foundation...