

“Cultural differences, race and belonging in the Western Cape”

Harold Wolpe Memorial Trust's 57th open dialogue

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SPEAKERS

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CHAIRPERSON

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TRANSCRIPT

AnnMarie Wolpe:

Good evening everyone. I'd like to preface tonight's discussion by highlighting some of the analyses that Harold [Wolpe] made on questions of race, because I think they are particularly relevant in light of this evening's topic, dealing as it does with the abstract ideas of race and racism.

Harold's life was dedicated to fighting inequalities, through both political activities and his academic writing. In his 1972 article, entitled *Capitalism and Cheap Labour Power in South Africa: From Segregation to Apartheid*, Harold questioned the notion that political segregation was solely responsible for racism. He said this wasn't so. Instead, he argued that the capitalist system was in fact to blame for racism, in that the capital mode of production is dependent on a cheap labour force, which in turn could sustain itself through a rural economy.

A perfect example was to be found in the mining industry, where mines paid migrant labourers at very low rates – they were able to do this precisely because the families of such labourers were able to sustain themselves by means of what, by the 1920's, had become almost entirely a subsistence farming economy, due to government co-option of land.

But, Harold argued, this process was not predicated on race – its victims were chosen not because of their race as such, but because they were the peasants who could be employed on those terms. In this way, the apartheid state was able to maintain and extend capitalism, by guaranteeing a cheap and controlled labour force, despite (or because of) disintegration in rural economies.

In effect, what Harold's article did in 1972 was to shift the emphasis away from racism *qua* racism, and onto the economic structure that contributed to the rampant racism that was a feature of South Africa. As the academic Henry Bernstein was to write in Harold's obituary, this was simply the most path-breaking theoretical statement in South African Marxism during the apartheid period. The concepts in the article contributed to the revival of the mass struggle by helping to ignite black labour militancy and black trade unionism, which was to become a critical force in the demise of apartheid.

I think when one talks about race, class, and cultural aspects, the point made in that article is a good one to bear in mind. I'd like to end by mentioning the impact of stereotypes. One could argue that the cultures we are born into successfully transmit stereotypical beliefs, which are very powerful in influencing our perceptions and behaviour, even as we are unconscious of them. It is when those stereotypes become politicized that they become dangerous. With that, I'll hand over to tonight's facilitator, Dr Charles Villa-Vicencio.

Charles Villa-Vicencio:

Ladies and gentlemen, you've just had vintage AnnMarie Wolpe (*laughter*). My task tonight is to introduce the initiator of this Cape Unifier Initiative. Solly Moeng is one of those social entrepreneurs of Cape Town, who comes up with good ideas and turns them into practice. He's a well-known social commentator in this city, never shy to state his opinions. I'm going to hand over to him, so that he can say a few words on this Cape Unifier Initiative.

Solly Moeng:

Good evening. I'm very happy to see this rich diversity in the audience that has come to hear about this idea tonight. You don't know what it means to me to look out on an audience like this. There are three things I want to say tonight. The first is: we are all stuck with one another. There's no way that any race group can stand up and say we're going to get rid of the others, shoot them all down or drive them into the sea. We all have to work together. Or... we can try the Palestine/Israel way – pit two groups against each other and remain in conflict for 50 years with no progress. But I don't think that's what we want!

Secondly, everything that is said here in front is meant to provoke debate, real debate, so please challenge us. Nothing said up here is sacrosanct. There are many situations in South Africa where people will state certain things only when they are in 'safe' company. We want with this Initiative to create a safe forum for open discussion. We aren't going to find the solutions for our society's ills without

discussion. The secret to the future that we all have to create for SA is accommodation – accommodating the differences of others.

The third thing I want to say is that as regards the Cape Unifier Initiative, nothing is cast in stone right now. The object, which will depend on what comes out of the debate tonight, is to change the way we perceive one another in the Western Cape, to shift our emphasis from a Malay or a black perspective to a *people* perspective.

You know, I used to write a lot of letters to the papers and so on. But one day I realized that a hundred years could go by and people would still be making exactly the same complaints. So I thought that what we needed was a real forum for discussion of topical issues. The Cape, as we all know, is divided into racial blocks – we're not going to resolve this by building a hospital for Xhosas in Langa, one for coloureds on the Cape Flats. And one for whites in Llandudno. There need to be physical changes in the structure of the Cape. That's not what the Initiative is all about, but it does aim to get us talking about issues like that.

The idea for this started last year, and one of the first things we did was to see if anyone else was doing something similar, to avoid duplication. One of the organisations I went to was the Harold Wolpe Memorial Trust, who opened its doors to working with this new baby. I want to say a profound thank you to Annemarie and to Tracy for their incredible support. We have also spoken to other organisations in the Cape who are involved in healing the ills of our society:

- The Cape Argus has been a very willing partner, and we are grateful for the exposure they give us. Their sms forums and similar things allow for greater participation by people.
- The Trauma Centre
- The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation
- The District Six Museum
- The Centre for Conflict Resolution
- The South African Ubuntu Foundation
- The Amy Biehl Foundation
- The Institute for Healing of Memories
- The Cape Town Mother City Festival
- The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
- The Home for All Campaign

There were others who came to us later, who we didn't even realize existed, and it was great that they approached us. The Cape Unifier doesn't want to become another NGO. We don't have funding, a logo, staff, an office – rather, we want to become a concept. We recognize that there's already a lot of work being done on the ground, and we want to work with those people.

Today is very important for us, because the aim is to see the extent to which people think this thing makes sense. It's very important that you tell us exactly what you really think. If you think it's rubbish, say so, so we know what to do next.

The Initiative will take the form of a series of debates, which animate the audience and get people to speak honestly. All political parties in the Western Cape are guilty of using race to mobilize electorates, especially parties seeking to mobilize the black and coloured electorate. We want to create an environment in which, in four or five years time, political parties can be made to feel guilty for mobilizing race issues, and embarrassed for resorting to such a technique.

We want to create a Cape where we talk about *people* issues, not coloured, black or white issues. This sounds ambitious, I know - but I have a son. When he's 16, I don't want him to look at me and say: "Dad, what did you do?" I don't want us to pass on these same malaises to the next generation. Every one of us who has lived in this country for the last 25 years has been affected by apartheid, and we pass on those effects whether we are aware of them or not. The Cape Unifier Initiative is about stopping those malaises now so that they don't keep affecting us.

So, the idea tonight is to establish the extent to which we need to create platforms such as these, so that we don't pass on these illnesses to our kids. There are many things that we don't talk straight about. The Cape Unifier is intended to be a platform where we talk straight to each other about what needs to happen to create the society we want. To finish, let me say that this Unifier is meant to be like a song waiting for our voices to form one great Western Cape choir to sing it, truly united in its diversity. We have what it takes to change the ways we look at each other, work with each other, think about each other. We don't have to continue with the apartheid racial paradigms that up until now are still going strong, informing so much of our behaviour.

Charles Villa-Vicencio:

Thank you. I think we are at the beginning of a remarkable initiative. In South Africa today, we are confronted by both a marvellous opportunity and a threat, as we grapple with issues of race, otherness, difference, and we must grapple differently to how we have in the past.

We have two remarkable speakers here tonight. Kevin is presently the MD of the South African Ubuntu Foundation. Prior to that, he's had a long career with First National Bank.

We also have Ryland Fisher, CEO of Sekunjalo Media Holdings and chair of the Cape Town Festival. Most of us know Ryland as former editor of the *Cape Times*, and assistant editor of the *Sunday Times*.

With that, I will hand over to our principle speakers for tonight.

Kevin Chaplin:

We have an absolutely wonderful country and the best part is the people, but sadly these very people are not embracing each other or really connecting with people of other colour, culture and/or religion. Granted there are pockets of excellence and examples where this is indeed happening but far too few. You will find people disagreeing and saying "oh no in our business everybody embraces each other". I must say these people are unfortunately kidding themselves.

As a white, Christian South African blessed and privileged to have black, white, coloured, Indian, Christian, Jewish and Muslim friends I am saddened that very little progress has been made by white, coloured and Indian people in embracing black people. They will go to great lengths to tell you they have but the harsh reality is it is just not happening.

For the past few years as the Provincial Manager of a large Corporate I would spend some of my marketing budget buying tables at charitable events every month to find that invariably I was the only table at the event with black people. This happened over and over again. I was also invited to numerous events every month and again

out of 100 people you would be lucky to find 2 – 3 black people and sometimes none. This in a country where the majority is black.

I re-launched the first golf driving range in a black township, Khayelitsha, 18 months ago and invited everyone in my contacts. Normally when I did this I always had a very good response – sadly this time everyone had excuses. The only white that attended was me and the only coloured was the Premier and his wife. The Commissioner of Police, MEC for Safety and Security, MEC for Housing, MEC for Cultural Affairs and Sport attended but guess what they are all black. Many prominent black business people attended and we had the most amazing evening with a great band, lots of warmth and fun. I was extremely sad that other white and coloured people had not experienced the warmth of the people and the fun that we had.

In 2005 I tasked my Branch Managers with taking their staff into the townships in a very structured and well planned, exciting programme and it was unbelievable to see the resistance to this. I can still recall one of my Senior Administration Managers, a coloured lady, phoning me and telling me I was mad and there was no way she was going in. Well, she went and it was like a light bulb being switched on, she changed her whole attitude to black people, in fact she genuinely began to embrace black people and changed how she managed and behaved even to her clients. There were some of my white & coloured Customer Care co-ordinators who tried everything to get out of going into the township and some used the excuse that the restaurants were not halaal. Guess what! there are halaal restaurants. I watched these ladies whole attitude slowly change during the course of the experience, then engage with the Mamma from the restaurant, hug her and go away with a complete new mindset. Why should only tourists be flocking to our townships but South Africans are too fearful to do so? Before 1994 we had less than a million foreign tourists and since 1994 over 7 million.

You see our people are sitting in comfort zones, why should they step out and embrace other races, culture and religion? I will tell you why they should, because it is a wonderful, enriching, life-changing experience and if we are to truly achieve in our personal life, in business and as a nation then every single person needs to consciously engage and embrace people of other cultures, race and religion and make a concerted effort to understand and embrace each other.

Even worse is that racism abounds in our society. In fact I get quite horrified when I hear examples like ; “ How the *%*%* can you appoint a black person to control petty cash...” - (6 months ago – a business in Johannesburg); “ a black and white child playing together in the banking hall of a major bank, the white father comes tearing across the banking hall and says how many times have I told you not to play with black children” - (9 months ago in Cape Town); “ a coloured lady overheard saying theses blacks are ruining this country... “ - (3 months ago in CT): a black and white person walk into a shop and the black person gets to the counter first but the white person is offered to be helped first” - (5 months ago in JHB).

The fact is that racism is socially constructed and not innate. The sociological implications of this is that certain human beings are socialised into racism, and grow up with acquired and racist stereotypes that are learnt from birth.

The fact that people now blame “ black “ people for the current woes of the country is totally unacceptable. Yes, we have problems in our country but people are very quick to forget the inefficiencies in the previous apartheid government, the corruption, the personal enrichment by certain people in positions of power. People need to

acknowledge that prior to 1994 this country was going downhill – in the 10 years before 1994 economic growth averaged only 1% but since then it has averaged 2.7% and in the last few years we have seen figures of between 3 and 5%, exports have tripled over the past 7 years, we have seen increased productivity since 1994, the government has consistently reduced the inflation rate, we have one of the most tax efficient systems in the world, sound monetary and fiscal policies, SA is gradually becoming more competitive according to the global competitiveness report, moving from 43rd to 39th in 2002 to 18th in 2004. We have a positive trend in our per capita income since 1994 – between 1976-1994 it was a negative or decrease of 11%, 1994-1999 a positive of 0.6%. If we just grow our economy at 3% for the next 15 years we can increase the per capita income after inflation by 45%. I can go on with so many examples.

Granted there are many unacceptable things happening in our country, crime and corruption being one of them but we need to understand where we have come from as a country. Let us focus on the positives and address the challenges facing us together as a nation. We must also not forget that it was the previous apartheid government that caused most of the problems we experience today. A government who for over 40 years refused to educate the majority of the population and denied them of so much. We must accept that 40 years of Bantu Education cannot be eradicated in 13 years, however, our people are getting educated and housed at a world-beating rate.

Let us all go back to basics. We need to instil family values in all our children and to embrace the spirit of Ubuntu - a philosophy of life representing one's personal existence, humaneness and morality, where solidarity is the central element to survival within the community. The cardinal belief of Ubuntu is that a person can only be a person through the help of others, *umntu ngumntu ngabanye abantu* in Xhosa. Simply put, 'people are people through other people.' I am human because I belong. This concept acknowledges both the rights and the responsibilities of each citizen in promoting individual and societal well-being. A person with ubuntu is open and available to others, affirms others, does not feel threatened by others' strengths or abilities, because he or she recognises that we all belong to a greater whole.

However, a growing rift between new structures and traditional values has seen the erosion of the spirit of ubuntu, and made it difficult for people to interact openly in certain instances. If the concept of ubuntu is consciously harnessed, it has the power to bring about increased harmony within society, promoting a new patriotism among the members of our rainbow nation. In order to fully realise the spirit of ubuntu, it is crucial to engage members of our communities and the workplace in dialogue. When last did people in our suburbs approach their neighbours – whatever colour or religion to get to know them, have tea together. When did churches in the predominantly white or coloured suburbs visit churches in the townships and reciprocate with invitations to their churches. This is the first step towards achieving a caring nation with recognized democratic values and a social justice system that is based on equality, non-racism, non-sexism and human dignity.

The concept of Ubuntu is crucial to nation building. The important values of Ubuntu are group solidarity, conformity, compassion, respect, human dignity and collective unity. Respect is reciprocal irrespective of race, ethnicity, class, age, and gender. The fact that racism is a social construct means that if we all exert the effort, we can eradicate racism, so as to consolidate the spirit of Ubuntu. Equality, non-sexism and non-racism requires us to accept people who are different and discover our similarities. But Ubuntu emphasises the notion of mutual understanding and the active appreciation of the value of human difference. It requires us to know and

understand others within a multicultural environment. Multiculturalism teaches us to respect other cultures because we may not know what we can learn from other people whose views might be different from ours. That is why cultural diversity in a SA context requires us to even learn other people's languages. It is most frustrating to find schools still resisting teaching Xhosa and Principals finding every excuse under the sun why they are not able to teach it.

The South African Ubuntu Foundation was established for the very reason that if we sit back and wait another 13 years we will be no further unless initiatives and interventions are introduced that push people to step out of their comfort zones, engage and embrace each other to bridge the still evident barriers to mutual benefit, cross-cultural, cross-racial and cross-religion relationships. Businesses can increase their bottom line by putting their people through the Personal Discovery Workshops of the SA Ubuntu Foundation to get teams to better understand themselves, each other's culture and religion and to embrace one another. The Networking arm of the SA Ubuntu Foundation is a unique networking initiative to bring South Africans from different businesses, interests, race, cultures and religion around the table to develop lasting Ubuntu-grounded friendships, business connections and business partnerships. It will also provide them with emerging business insights, offer cutting edge leadership perspectives, stimulate collaborative opportunities, and model new and open ways for trusting, cross-racial partnerships to emerge within SA's economic sector.

Many people believed in South Africa before 1994, people must not get cold feet now. They must be even more determined to build a nation we can be proud of and come together in the spirit of ubuntu to tackle the challenges facing us and really move forward as a true rainbow nation where communities unite and find common ground across their diversity of race, religion, culture, language and geography.

The Indian President said Righteousness of the heart leads to beauty of the character which leads to peace and harmony in your land. Archbishop Tutu said God cannot wipe away a tear or put a hand of encouragement out to someone , but through you and you and you he can. We are God's messengers on earth. Through us he can hug someone or wipe away a tear.

Ryland Fisher:

Chairperson, honourable guests, it is indeed an honour for me to speak on such an illustrious occasion and to such an illustrious audience, many of whom are probably more qualified than me to speak here today on a topic that has as much relevance today as it had ten, 20, 30 or 50 years ago.

I am not an academic and I have no aspirations to be an academic, so those of you who have come here today expecting an academic dissertation will be disappointed. However, I do believe that I try to keep in touch with ordinary South Africans and try to reflect their views in much of what I write and speak about. Unlike most ordinary South Africans, at least I get opportunities to speak to audiences like yourself. So effectively, through my writing and speaking, I am trying to give a voice to so many voiceless people out there.

What I thought I would do today is to speak a bit about the One City Many Cultures initiative that I ran while I was still editor of the *Cape Times* and finally speak about why an initiative such as the Cape Unifier is important. I will try to do this in less than the 15 minutes allocated to me, so that we can have more time for interaction.

I have thought a lot about the role of newspapers in our developing democracy? Should it still be the watchdog of our society? Or should it play a role in developing our democracy? This is an ongoing debate to which there seems to be no resolution in sight.

This debate, about the media's role in society, was at the back of my mind in September 1998 when I thought up the concept of One City Many Cultures, which was meant to challenge fundamentally the thinking in the city on racialism, cultural intolerance and religious exclusivity. It was a project aimed at promoting tolerance and understanding in Cape Town and the Western Cape.

My feeling was that newspapers could no longer merely play a watchdog role in society. Yes, this role is still important, but it is also important for newspapers, because of the influence they wield, to help to change perceptions, to help to develop democracy. Newspapers should not only be mirrors on our society; they should also help to determine what is reflected in this mirror.

September 1998, as some of you may remember, was shortly after the Planet Hollywood bomb blast and the level of racial and cultural intolerance in Cape Town had reached unprecedented heights. We saw this in letters to the editor, which we often had to censor because they were just too full of hatred. There was a general suspicion among different groups of people towards people who were different to them.

I felt, as editor of the *Cape Times* at the time, that as a newspaper we could no longer sit back and complain about what was happening. We had to play a proactive role in dealing with the religious, cultural and racial intolerance in our city.

One City Many Cultures was my response. It was an editorially driven initiative in which we examined, every day for 12 weeks spread throughout the year, different aspects of different religions and cultures in our city. We looked at births, growing up, marriage, religious festivals, growing old, death and remembrance and many other aspects of life.

We commissioned some of the top writers in the city to look at all these different aspects and assigned Garth Stead, one of our outstanding young photographers to work with some of the best photographers in the country. We commissioned Jen Crocker, then Insight editor of the *Cape Times*, to work full-time on this project. We also arranged for Beryl Eichenberger, Independent Newspapers Cape's promotion manager at the time, to work full-time on the One City Many Cultures project. We had to make sure that this project got the attention it deserved.

But first we had to get money to make it happen. We approached several business people, first through a breakfast and then individually, and the response we got was overwhelming. There was a sense that this initiative was necessary, not only because it would make people feel good, but also because it was necessary for the economic growth in our city to deal with intolerance. Intolerance, as we have seen in the Western Cape, has the potential to lead to violence, which not only destroys lives, but can also destroy our economy.

We then launched a major promotional campaign which involved a series of award-winning advertisements, a photographic competition, an essay writing competition, finally culminating in the One City Festival, which was a joint initiative between the *Cape Times* and the City of Cape Town. It was the first time there had been such a partnership between a major newspaper and a local government authority.

The festival, which was over three days, was timed to coincide with Heritage Day on September 24. Its central focus was on bringing people into the city centre, with the intention of branching out onto the Cape Flats in the following years.

After the second year, we decided to move it to March and to focus it around Human Rights Day instead. The Festival was held again this year, for the eighth year in a row, which means that the spirit of One City Many Cultures continues to live on.

We continue to enjoy a good relationship with the City, and have also developed a good relationship with the Province and national government. Most importantly, is that we have slowly but surely increased our support from the private sector.

This has not happened by chance and is largely due to a group of fantastic individuals who share the vision of a city that will be a welcome place for all its inhabitants.

I am also pleased to announce that this year we had eight community festivals, in diverse places such as Khayelitsha, Sir Lowry's Pass Village, Ocean View, Langa, Durbanville, Hanover Park and Mitchells Plain. And on top of this, we took the best acts from these community festivals and hosted them at a special event at the Baxter last week.

One of my biggest regrets is that, once I left the *Cape Times*, the One City Many Cultures project was discontinued. However, I am glad that it continues to live in the Cape Town Festival.

The Cape Unifier Initiative is, in some ways, a logical extension of One City Many Cultures. It is an attempt to get people talking about their differences and their similarities. It works from the premise that there are still huge gulfs between us that we have to cross.

I see these gulfs every day when I read the SMS column in the Cape Argus and notice the hatred that sometimes comes through in these readers' contributions.

At the time of One City Many Cultures, I spoke all over the city to anyone who was prepared to listen about this vision of a united city. I encouraged people at the time to start One City Many Cultures projects in the communities, at their work places, at their places of learning.

I said I did not need to know about it, as long as it was happening. Some people took me up on that challenge. In fact, I know of at least one private company that is making a lot of money every year based on one of the concepts we generated through One City Many Cultures.

The Cape Unifier Initiative is, as far as I know, not going to be a money-making venture, but it is something that should be supported. I am particularly pleased that the *Cape Argus* is supporting this initiative.

I believe the problems that we face in this city and this province with regards to racism and cultural intolerance are too big for us to squabble about who does what: if all of us do something, then maybe we will be able to make a small impact on a big problem.

My feeling is that this is still necessary to develop a series of One City Many Cultures initiatives in different communities all over the Western Cape. We might not have had bomb blasts for quite a while in Cape Town, but the factors that lead to racial and cultural intolerance still exist. That is what makes a project like One City Many Cultures that much more important. And that is why I am here today to support the Cape Unifier Initiative. For all our sakes, I hope it will work.

Thank you

Charles Villa-Vicencio:

What I've always admired about editors and sub-editors is their capacity for taking a long rambling piece and reducing it to few words! (*laughter*)

I think what we've heard tonight is that racism, suspicion and fear are alive and well. It would have been unbelievable to come out of 300 years of colonialism without that, so we shouldn't be too hard on ourselves. Perhaps we should remind ourselves that the apartheid government didn't create racism - they merely perfected it. It is deep inside all of us and perhaps the only way we can move on is to confront this, talk about our perceptions and attempt to change them by engagement with each other.

We've heard quite a few negative points made. But there are some remarkable initiatives taking place in Cape Town that are bringing us together. We must not lose sight of those and get bogged down in the negatives. Our first speaker mentioned that we manage to live side by side and show civil respect for one another, but somehow we haven't fully engaged. I want to suggest that it is at that point that the hidden genius of this country lies. If we can get that right, we'll rise to be the nation that in our better moments we know what we can be.

Comments from the Floor:

1. I have three issues. The first concerns the issue of parochialism that I feel has characterized the talks tonight. The speakers have deemed the issue of cultural difference, race, and belonging, as being a phenomenon unique to the Western Cape. Of course these are concerns in the Western Cape, but I imagine that by characterising the issues, as you do, into a geographical spatial issue, you are actually playing into hands of a bigger political ideology.

Secondly, by deeming the problems of the metropolitan city of Cape Town to be the problems of the entire Western Cape, the speakers are making problematic assumptions.

Thirdly, I grew up in this city and spent time studying at this institution (UCT), but I also spent many years abroad, where my wife and I had a child. When we brought him back here he was deemed by everyone around him to be a coloured - but he did not comprehend this and it caused him a great deal of unhappiness.

This deeming of someone as a coloured, for instance, is deeply imbedded in South Africans. My point is that this Unifier idea might be fine in a place like San Francisco, but we must be careful of creating a false sense of unification when in fact we are not paying attention to or acknowledging the deep divisions that actually exist.

2. My question is for Kevin. You spoke of the concept of ubuntu. How do you think the materialism, consumerism and individualism that is promoted in the Western Cape and South Africa, affect the concept of ubuntu?
3. I'm a paramedic working in Pollsmoor Prison. If you look at racism, you see that it is led by and reflected in the leadership of political parties. Kevin is involved in processes that drive change, which is good. But in the foundation where you are, Kevin, you don't have the space to do your good for large numbers of people. If you had a political office, you could do a lot more good.

I agree that we need to take whites into the townships – but they have to be safe and secure. Crime is all over. In SA, we are never safe. Therefore, before we can take people anywhere, we have to secure them. I know from my own experience that our prisons are full - we need to make a difference on the outside to avoid further escalation of crime.

4. I'd like to mention that there are some external factors that you cannot always quantify or know when speaking about integration in the Western Cape. For instance, what about immigrants coming in? How are we going to accommodate and enhance the voice of incomers?

Panel Responses:

Kevin

I'll touch on the first comment. I'm not kidding myself that these problems are only in the Western Cape. But we live here and we have to start somewhere.

The problem of stereotyping and deeming someone to be 'a coloured' - it is a major problem, I agree completely. However, that is a reality we've lived with for all these years and it will take us a while to overcome these stereotyping responses. It is a big challenge that we face.

On the issue of materialism – it has a huge effect on ubuntu. All this materialism actually eradicates the philosophy of ubuntu. We have to move away from the greed. This is what institutions like the South African Ubuntu Foundation are about, seeking to challenge people and address these issues, getting people to unburden and begin to understand each other's culture.

The trips into the townships that we do are very well organized in terms of security. There is crime everywhere, of course, but it's just about doing it properly. The threat of crime shouldn't be a reason why we don't even consider these trips.

On the comment about doing more good in a political office...I think the main constraint on spreading the benefits of our work is lack of funding. Funding is a big problem for me. We are poised to do wonderful things, but the challenge is to get funding to make these programmes a reality. If I can get the funding, I believe we can be one of the most significant forces for change. I don't believe in leaving everything to politics. I think we have to do it ourselves, and get businesses and individuals involved to provide the funds and the manpower.

Ryland

I have spent the past five years working on this book on race and racism in post-apartheid South Africa. We're finally publishing in June, yet I still feel it's not

complete, and that I haven't said what is on my mind. The whole issue of race and racism is extremely complex. The book was based on 15 interviews, one of which was with Rhoda Khadali. I remember her asking me if I was prepared for this journey I was undertaking and I didn't know what she meant. The more work I did though, the more I realized what she meant. I found I could not remain unaffected by what I was doing.

When I interviewed Karel Boshoff, for instance (founder of the Afrikaans 'volksstaat' Oranje), I left the interview totally confused. I found myself agreeing with a lot of what he said, and I couldn't believe that I was actually agreeing with this man, this arch-racist. For example, one of the things he said was: "what we do in Oranje is what everyone else does in the rest of South Africa. The majority of South African people socialize only in their own racial groups. And that's what we do in Oranje". And he's right. I've been to hundreds of parties where there are only whites or only coloureds. I had to agree with him, although I would have liked it to be otherwise.

The issue of xenophobia which was raised is related to the other comment about not being able to guarantee safety while there is poverty. Xenophobia, I believe, is ultimately about contestation for jobs. Have you noticed that it's not an issue when white immigrants come in, only black – and that's because the contest for jobs is at that level – the majority is fighting for a very small part of the pie. White immigrants are not seen as a threat by people in the townships, because they are not competing for the same jobs. I think xenophobia is about economics more than it's about racism.

Kevin

I just want to add that we have to start somewhere. If what you do affects 100 people, they will go out and affect 1000 people and so on. We need determination to get out there. We can't sit back and say it's too big to be done.

Solly

In reply to the comment about whether it's too early to start the Unifier – when would it be the right time to start it? We have to start today.

Regarding xenophobia, and the extent to which white immigrants are not competing for the jobs that many black South Africans are seeking – I'm not sure if that's true. Restaurants and coffee shops in Cape Town are frequently staffed by (white) German and American students – those are jobs which could have gone to black South Africans. The Cape Unifier is precisely about tackling these perceptions that we've absorbed over the years, but which may not be accurate.

Comments from the Floor:

1. The greatest evil to come out of the apartheid system was this hierarchy of whites, then coloureds, then blacks. As long as we continue to use these terms (white, coloured and black) we perpetuate that system. I want to appeal to speakers to stop using the word 'coloured'. There are a lot of demeaning associations attached to that word, and for many people it is just as despicable as the 'K' word.
2. On the issue of culture – there's another culture operating in our province that is very destructive, and that is the culture of crime. Everything we try to do is affected by this culture of crime. It's an insidious issue that is not totally explained by poverty. Instead, it's the result of a culture in which people want to make an

easy living, and this culture or mindset is increasingly catching on. I believe we need to nip this in the bud.

One other issue: what the country lacks is a robust opposition. Our politics is not characterised by a culture of debate. The government perceives and responds to everything that is said by opposition parties, as criticism. In fact, we need that debate at political level. Instead of welcoming challenges from the opposition, our government treats every criticism as a form of traitorship.

3. I appreciated Annemarie reminding us that Harold emphasised the role of class. While he may have overstated the position slightly, the fact is that in the discussion we've had now, class hasn't been mentioned once. The vast economic discrepancies existing between white, black and coloured people are still there. We're not going to overcome these discrepancies by discussions about culture.
4. I would like to add to that comment: we must remember that, as Harold said, the mother of racism is capitalism itself. Here in South Africa the Afrikaner capitalists protected their position by creating these buffer zones, these divisions within divisions. Thus they gave coloureds a little more than blacks, and so on. This is the reason we look at each other as if we're better than each other, but what is the solution?

These divides and mindsets were promoted in churches, schools and businesses. So why don't we consider breaking down the divides by the same methods? We should talk to the government about developing a curriculum to demystify racism. These kinds of curricula could then be deployed in churches, schools, sports institutions etc.

Panel Responses:

Kevin

I agree with you fully, Speaker 1, but we can't kid ourselves that racial classification hasn't been around for the last 60 years. It has been around, it has had an impact. We have to get away from it, and the only way we can is by going through programmes that help people not to see colour. That's going to take us a while.

On the culture of crime, I'm chairman of Business Against Crime for the province, so I am involved with this issue. There are lots of reasons for crime, but I believe that a key one is definitely poverty. More than 20% of our population lives in abject poverty, and the unemployment levels amongst youth are very high. However, it's more than simple poverty, it's also lack of parental guidance. Did you know that Tik abuse levels are the highest in the relatively affluent suburb of Tableview? Interestingly, a very high proportion of single parent families live in Tableview. I think crime is caused by a multitude of things, but we've got to accept where we've come from: crime is a result of that and is not to be tackled overnight.

Ryland

When I was editor of the *Cape Times* I inherited a newspaper of 99% white staff. All the columnists were white. So I went to the University of the Western Cape to speak to academics there to encourage them to write for the *Cape Times*. They all promised they would - but not a single one did.

I spoke to them about it again later, and I realized that barrier was a kind of fear of being seen to criticise the government and the ANC. I'm not sure what the basis of this fear is (maybe it has to do with the ANC being able to offer them well paid jobs), but it is a major problem when black intellectuals are scared to raise their voices. It's something that needs to be dealt with.

Class is obviously a major issue. I linked the xenophobia issue with economics and class. I agree that crime is also something that can be linked to class. The entire history of our country is one in which those who have held the economic power have been able to control the country. In 1994 we got our political liberation but we have a long fight to go in achieving economic liberation.

Comments from the Floor:

1. There's one subject that no-one has talked about regarding racism and that's religion. Judaism and Christianity have come from an Anglo-Saxon origin. Both have provided justification for racist activities such as slavery. By unveiling the truth behind these religious bases we can reveal those aspects of racist ideology which have always been shrouded in, and given authority by, religious rhetoric. Having done this, we can move forward to a spirituality in which no-one is discriminated against.
2. I'm a believer that in society there are always leaders and followers. Leaders are essentially those in charge of the economy. We're all in it to provide for our families. Because society's leaders are those who run the businesses and the economy, I think this Initiative has a good chance at success, because they (leaders) have economic power, which ultimately boils down to shaping policy. If the wealthy can influence policy with regard to the running of the country, we can work to developing policies that encourage unity.
3. I feel like we're preaching to the converted here. What we need is not to convince ourselves of this need for unity, but to have strong leadership from the top. How can we achieve any feeling of togetherness if our State President himself sees everything in terms of colour and race?
4. I have two points. Firstly, we have to revisit the line between class and racism in a deeper way than we are doing here tonight. We cannot deal with racism by evoking all sorts of examples and anecdotes, which are actually quite parochial and do not have a very wide resonance. Instead, we need to provide people with the conceptual tools to understand their experience. We need to look again at the success we had in the 1980's, and then remind ourselves that conceptual tools need not be confined to universities. I don't believe you can change deep structural issues by giving people a few days of knowing The Other.

Secondly, all these racism experiences are not unique to South Africa or this period in history. We can use examples and experiences from history all over the world to help us understand racism and move forward from it.

Panel Responses:

Kevin

I fully agree on the religion issue, so I'm not even going to go into that. On the top leadership comment - to me, that is a typical South African response. We always say

“They must start up there”. No - we must start with ourselves. We can't wait for the top to start.

I agree that we need the conceptual tools, and the change process can't be too simplistic. It is a journey that people have to go on.

Ryland

The reason I decided to write this book was because I saw the debate around racism being increasingly directed and co-opted by the right wing. I wanted to place it back in a progressive context. I've tried to write the book in a simple and popular way on the topic of race and racism, and that may serve as a tool that people can use to gain understanding about racism.

Comments from the Floor:

1. I have one statement, made by a man named Wayne Dyer: if you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.
2. My question is, as South African people, how can we put up with the levels of corruption in this country? The reality is that good jobs are given to people who are committing crime, in that they are corrupt. People are not being held responsible for the wrong things they do. A person in an ethical position with a responsibility, such as a doctor or a nurse, how can they accept bribes?

Final Panel Responses:

Kevin

The only way I can sum up is to say that I'm more determined than ever to change South Africa. I can't do it alone – I need investors and I need hands. If anyone here is prepared to help in any way, please approach me.

Ryland

I'd like to end by saying that the only way we can really deal with racism is if we talk about it, a lot. It's easy to develop racist attitudes toward each other because we don't know each other. The more we talk and exchange, the more we can work against this.

Solly

I have to thank you again for taking the time to be here tonight. The aim of today has been to judge, from the audience response, whether the Cape Unifier would be accepted. Of course we have national problems, but we also have very specific problems in the Western Cape, and this is what the Unifier is meant to discuss. We'd like to hear more from you on how you think the Unifier should work, the topics we can discuss, and similar issues. Please make contact and let us know what you think.

END