RUSSEL BOTMAN

A TRIBUTE

1953–2014

Editors

ALBERT GRUNDLINGH

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SUN MEDIA

Russel Botman – A Tribute 1953–2014

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CONTENTS

Preface	i
<i>Nico Koopman</i>	
1. His Youth and Student Years	1
<i>Cornelius Thomas</i>	
2. Who Lights The Candles? His Role as Minister and Church Leader	43
<i>Johan G Botha</i>	
3. His Life as Theologian	73
<i>Dirkie Smit</i>	
4. His Didactics	101
<i>Mary-Anne Plaatjies-Van Huffel and Anlené Taljaard</i>	
5. As Vice-Rector (Teaching): 1 July 2002 – 31 December 2006	117
<i>Ludolph Botha</i>	
6. As Manager	131
<i>Paul Cluver and Gerhard Lubbe</i>	
7. HOPE Project	153
<i>Martin Viljoen</i>	
8. From Excellence to Significance – Botman in a Wider Context	175
<i>Marita Hilliges and Andrew Casson</i>	
9. Hope@Africa Project	185
<i>MS Tshehla</i>	
10. Interaction with African Counterparts	195
<i>Thabo T Fako</i>	

11. In Memoriam – A Rector Remembered	199
<i>Albert Grundlingh</i>	
12. Epilogue	207
<i>Beryl Botman</i>	
Gallery	216

PREFACE

*Nico Koopman*¹

This celebratory volume pays homage to the late Hayman Russel Botman who died suddenly, early in his second term as rector and vice-chancellor of Stellenbosch University.

Botman's story is told from his earliest childhood years until his last day as rector.

Russel Botman was a minister and public theologian who exercised his theology in the three public spheres identified by the Roman Catholic theologian, David Tracy, namely church, broader society and academics.

Botman served in all these areas. He served churches at the local level of individual, family and congregation, and in the wider context of denomination and ecumenism – locally and globally. He influenced public opinion and served the different terrains of the broader society, among others politics, the economy, ecology, as well as the civil society with its many spheres of among others individual, marriage, family, circle of friends, neighbourhood, institutions for education, sport, culture, art, trade unions as well as volunteer organisations, social movements and non-governmental organisations. Botman served academics at the University of the Western Cape, but especially at Stellenbosch University, as well as in national, continental en global regard.

The variety of contributions also reflects Botman's multiple involvements and diverse ways of service delivery. Interwoven contributions focus on Botman's church involvement (Johan Botha), academic teaching (Plaatjies-Van Huffel and Taljaard), academic research (Smit), local and international university management (Ludolph Botha, Viljoen, Cluver, Lubbe, Tshehla,

1 Prof Nico Koopman is Vice-Rector: Social Impact, Transformation and Personnel, Stellenbosch University.

Hillegas, Casson en Fako). His wife, Beryl Botman, provides a more intimate view of Botman's many dimensions.

The contribution by Thomas on Botman's childhood and youth years confirms how Botman was shaped from a young age to operate in a wider context. Grundlingh looks back to provide perspective on the holistic focus of this believer and minister, responsible citizen, public theologian, academic and university manager.

A tribute is literally a eulogy, a good word about an individual. Mindful of hagiography, the focus is especially on describing Botman's legacy that can be built upon in future.

The nature of tributes and celebratory volumes is that they can never be exhaustive. They tell a story from limited perspectives. However, they serve as invitation, stimulus and inspiration to others connected to Botman to also tell their stories about his story. If this volume succeeds as a catalyst, it has served its purpose.

Russel as a young student.

Theology, UWC, 1981: Induction as minister of religion. Russel Botman is at the back, second from the right.

1. HIS YOUTH AND STUDENT YEARS

*Cornelius Thomas*¹

INTRODUCTION

“Dear Father, we are doing well and we hope to hear the same from you, by returning mail.” These are the oldest extant words of an eleven-year-old boy who grew up to be man with a mission. This is his “voice” recorded for posterity. He wrote these words to his father far away to calm the anxieties he knew his old man felt about his family. He expressed hope that his dad would be well too. He cared for the family at home (the group) and about his dad (the individual). The boy expected a reply by return post, understanding and insisting, then already, that communication was a reciprocal process.

Eleven years later, the boy had grown into a strapping young man, a student, who said, “We simply take over.” This was of course an ambitious statement, but one articulated in a context of discrimination and oppression, of apartheid South Africa. I used these quotations as navigational tools as I entered the early life story – youth and student years – of this boy-man, Russel Botman. I joined an individual now gone, but one who still speaks.

I bend my knee to the assertion that “Biography, today, remains, as it has always been, the record and interpretation of real lives – the lives of others and of ourselves.”² This biographical sketch is about the life of my subject, Russel Botman (1953–2014). I had seen him in action, overheard him a few times, but I do not remember that we ever chatted. Still, as author of this chapter, I must put it plainly that while this is a biographical sketch about him (the other), it is also patently my narrative, my active entry into and interpretation of his early life.

1 Dr Cornelius Thomas is an historian and Head of Cory Library, Rhodes University.

2 Hamilton N, *How to Do Biography: A Primer*, Harvard University Press, 2008, 21.

Renowned American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson writes in his essay ‘History’ that “[a]ll history becomes subjective; in other words, there is properly no history; only biography”. The sage asserts that history “must be explained from individual history, or must remain words.”³ In Emerson’s cosmos, the human mind reigns supreme, and that is true. But it is also true that many human minds come together and form the civil mind, including the questing mind of a people in search of something better. I accepted Emerson’s advice, but for my point about the civil mind I also turned it around. Botman’s voice, sparse but real, is also suggested by those who knew him and by the social forces of his youthful years. For the paucity of voice, I could stray, but because of “civil history” (social history), I mustered the courage to make him real.

Novelist of *Ragtime*-fame, EL Doctorow, puts it that “History is the present. That’s why every generation writes it anew. But what most people think of as history is the end product, myth.”⁴ Doctorow allows for myth, but warns that “to be irreverent to myth, to play with it, let in some light and air, to try to combust it back into history, is to risk being seen as someone who distorts truth.” This narrative derives much of its life from secondary voices and old memories and as such parts of it may well be myth. There may be imaginative speculation here and there as this tale unfolds, but I tried to steer clear of myth in an effort to put Russel’s actual, authentic life before posterity.

CHILDHOOD AND PRIMARY SCHOOL

In the spring of 1953, Bloemfontein chugged along as a bleak urban sprawl threatening to become a city. Clinging precariously to it, one would find the historically coloured neighbourhood of Heidedal (Heatherdale) basking peacefully in the sun. Imagine adults purposefully walking along dusty streets; consider a bicycle or three. Washing flapped on lines and children played where they could. The area’s dwellings suggested inhabitants ranging

3 Emerson RW, ‘History’ in *The Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Essays, First Series*, Vol. II, Macmillan and Co, 1906, 16.

4 ‘EL Doctorow: The Art of Fiction, No. 94’, EL Doctorow interviewed by George Plimpton, *The Paris Review*, Winter 1986, <http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/2718/the-art-of-fiction-no-94-e-l-doctorow>

from dirt poor to the lower middle class. The houses and lean-tos seemed defeated. But a church here and there symbolised hope. Political clouds also loomed overhead. On the African side of the town, two years before, the African National Congress had decided on the Defiance of Unjust Laws Campaign. Then, in 1952, the Defiance Campaign threatened. A year later, the dust had settled. Now, in Heatherdale, Karel Petrus Botman and his wife Mavis (née Louw) were expecting their first child.

The baby arrived on time on Sunday, 18 October 1953. A boy. Shortly after, the proud parents baptised him Hayman Russel in the local Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC) – the church for coloureds.

The boy grew up within the realm of the coloured experience in the 1950s and 60s. This young family was relatively poor, but parents Karel and Mavis strived to become part of the lower middle class. Karel acted as an evangelist. He and his family embraced the tenets of Christianity throughout. Indeed, devotion to the Christian way of life constituted the very basis of coloured culture. The family subsisted on a plain diet – “thin porridge” for breakfast, sandwiches in the middle of the day, and potato, rice and meat for dinner. Sundays they enjoyed dessert also, mostly custard and jelly. They dressed plainly; they could neither afford nor did they desire anything ostentatious. Russel knew to take care of his shoes and daily polished his one pair, for the dusty gravel street down to Dr Blok comprehensive school and around did not help matters. After school, he played with his siblings, three sisters and a brother – Ethne, Phebe, Grace and Deon. “Yes, we were enough to play on our own,”⁵ one remembered. Sometimes they strayed into the street and played with other children also.

The only time Russel pursued a more individual sport, was when he dabbled in boxing and body-building. But this did not last long. He mostly organised, supervised, guided.

The evangelist dad knew he wanted to qualify himself as a proper minister. He thus went back to Dr Blok, the school, with the intention of matriculating and then going on to university. At one point he and Russel

5 Phebe Botman-Kerspuy interview, Roodepoort, 18 July 2015.

walked to school together. Coloureds truly believed that, alongside religion, education was their salvation, their ticket to upward mobility.

“When I went to school, my father also went back to school to do his Grade 9 and 10, so we were there at the same time because in those days there weren’t high schools and primary schools. We only had one school in the township,” Russel recalled. He fondly remembered these walks and that his father would pause at the school gate and knock out his pipe against the heel of his boot before they entered the premises. Russel understood the importance of education from his father’s example; he saw that one had to set oneself goals, even long-term ones.⁶ He looked up to his father, explaining, “My father’s decision to go back and study was fundamental in my childhood, as I realised how determined he was to be educated. After he finished high school, he went to the University College of the Western Cape to further his education so he could become a minister in the church, only returning home once a year.”⁷

His father, Karel Botman, therefore left his family in Heatherdale in the capable hands of his wife, Mavis, when Russel was still a young boy, and made for the Cape to pursue his studies and qualify as a pastor in the DRMC. First he studied at a theological college in Wellington and thereafter transferred to the University College of the Western Cape (also known as “Bush”). Students called the institution Bush at the time as it sat amid the sand-swept fynbos south of Bellville South.

Mavis kept the home fires burning by working as a typist for the DRMC Press. With publications from the press often making their way to the Botman’s home, their household always had words to play with – words in pamphlets, newspapers, books, comics.

While his mother worked, Russel took care of the kids. According to his brother, Deon, the younger siblings just did what they were supposed to do and this made Russel’s job easy. Russel also had the responsibility to buy the odd grocery items, especially bread. He kept an accurate record of the cash

6 Deon Botman interview, Roodepoort, 18 July 2015.

7 See ‘Lessons for Posterity: Steeped in Tradition but Changing with the Times’, <http://mags.capemedia.co.za/bbq/54/files/data/search.xml>

entrusted to him and of the expenditures. Russel had to make sandwiches for the afternoon's meal. Another specific task that fell to him was to light the fire so his mother could cook the evening meal soonest she got home. Predictably perhaps, "Russel acquired his sensitive side, his feminine side, through his close relationship with his mother."⁸

After school, Russel saw to it that his younger siblings did their chores and homework. He ensured that they attended the Kinderbond play meetings, a sort of church-based after-school activity arrangement, in the neighbourhood. Russel and his siblings should of course be understood in the context of the pastorate and its centrality in the community. They were the evangelist's children and as such they had to be exemplary. They had to lead.⁹

To this "pastoral" responsibility Russel took rather naturally, at home with his siblings and outside with other children. Russel's job of "managing" his siblings came easily. Firstly, all the siblings knew, whether their parents were physically present or not, that they enjoyed "security in their [parents'] constant emotional presence and in their love". That stabilised the sibling complex. Secondly, "Russel led by example and we followed, so it was never necessary for him to force us to do something." Russel's diligence in domestic duty flowed from the fact that "He wanted to give mummy peace of mind." This goal worked for them, the younger siblings, too. "Indeed, when Russel was there, everything was okay."¹⁰

Russel wrote his father at least three letters from Heatherdale. Two from 1965 survived. "Daddy, I am glad to once again make contact with you," he said in the first extant letter. The style bears a childlike respect, yet it is mature. In this letter he cautions his dad about not being too hasty with a certain purchase. Then with wit he added, "How many subjects do daddy still have to write, because my thumb said it didn't hold thumbs for nothing and now he still has to hold even more and he also wants to hear the results." Then follows a bit about trapping wild animals, including "a steenbuck and

8 Beryl Botman interview, Cape Town, 8 July 2015.

9 Quintin Koetaan interview, Roodepoort, 18 July 2015.

10 Phebe Botman-Kerspuy interview.

a bat-eared fox”, with “grandpa and uncle Jim”. I suppose to augment the food supply at home. The boy ended his letter, saying: “[...] it is now time to conclude but remember us in your prayers and remember what the Lord Jesus said. ‘Do not let you hearts be troubled and do not be afraid,’ then we will also be able to keep the faith.”¹¹ Sounds like a father writing to his son! Then a postscript: “Remember and send the things daddy, okay? Promise me and remember that a promise is a promise.” The young Russel had already learned in his home that one had to honour one’s word.

Next Russel beamed, “I received your letter. It was a pleasure to read it.” Then followed tidbits about home and people in the neighbourhood. Even a joke. And finally, “Give my best regards to all the people I know. And tell them they must achieve success along with daddy. [...] I wish you every success and good fortune. May the Lord be your guardian and the others’ until the results arrive.”¹²

Clearly the boy believed in God and already had a ministering attitude. He also believed that if one had set oneself a goal, one had to achieve that goal, had to have something concrete to show for one’s effort, and he reminded his father of this.

Times were tough in the absence of Karel, but the Botman children did not suffer deprivation. When their school shoes were worn through, they had to show them to their mother afore they could get new ones. Sometimes they had mealie-rice, a barometer for coloured poverty in the 1960s, as part of their meal.

Russel often visited his step-grandfather (his mother’s stepfather), an Indian shopkeeper, Solly Evans. Sometimes when the boy, while still a little tyke and in junior primary school, felt unhappy at home, he packed a small case and bravely “eloped” to his grandfather. The old man and the boy were very fond of each other. The old-timer instilled in him the idea that he should become a medical doctor. Apparently Evans saved up some money for this purpose. The boy seriously considered a career in medicine, but he also felt

11 Russel to “Dear Father” [Karel Botman], 12 May 1965 (translated), Russel Botman Private Papers, collated by Beryl Botman. Russel was five months shy of his 12th birthday.

12 Russel to Karel Botman, 24 May 1965 (translated), Russel Botman Private Papers.

“called” to the ministry. At one point he thought that maybe he should become a medical missionary, for example in Malawi.¹³

By the end of 1966, Karel Botman was back home in the Orange Free State as a fully trained minister. The church posted him in Kroonstad. Life looked up, as dominee Botman now provided more delicious food, finer clothing and better accommodation for his family. Generally, but especially for coloureds in the rural bundu of the land, life consisted of a daily grind to provide food. Most boys thus left school after Standard 6, even earlier. Russel’s parents, however, had decided he would proceed beyond Standard 6 – as far as he could go.

As Kroonstad did not have high school for coloured kids and as the nearest boarding schools for them were far away in Graaff-Reinet (Spandau) and Ixopo (Little Flower), Karel and Mavis agreed that Russel should go to high school in Johannesburg – up the road, so to speak. They had family there. Mavis’s brother, Patrick Louw, was a teacher and he and his wife, Ginie, could keep an eye on Russel.

In January 1967, Russel moved in with his Uncle Patrick and Aunty Ginie in Kliptown, where a cacophony of brown and black people, from dirt poor to almost comfortable, lived in small houses of every description. At this time, the planned township of Eldorado Park and its extensions had begun to grow onto Kliptown, and to this must be added the residential-cum-industrial sprawl of Nancefield. Together, they kicked dust in the teeth and caused desolation in the heart, and arguably formed the roughest black-brown residential crush in Johannesburg. This bleak landscape welcomed Russel.

HIGH SCHOOL (1967–1971)

Shortly after his parents had dropped him at the Louw house in Lolla Street, Russel ventured into the neighbourhood to reconnoiter a bit. A quartet of cowards accosted him and swiftly relieved him of all his pocket money. A sobering introduction to the big city was this, and embarrassing too, so he did not share the harrowing experience with his Uncle Patrick.

13 Beryl Botman interview.

Then on to Standard 6 at Kliptown High School. Russel immediately impressed the teachers with his “pure Afrikaans”, which they encouraged him to keep on practising.¹⁴ He also straightaway showed his organisational and leadership skills and his class teacher made him a monitor. “He was a calm guy; an exemplary student. Very dependable! And we could trust him with responsibility,” said his English and Religious Instruction teacher.¹⁵

In Standard 6, 7 and 8, his English teacher continued, “Russel was an avid reader. He knew by heart the number of poems we expected our children to learn. All the English ones – like ‘If’ by Kipling!¹⁶ And he could recite Mark Antony’s speech about Julius Caesar, ‘Friends, Romans, Countrymen’, you know, in English *and* Afrikaans. Then there was that speech by Brutus also.” I assume the teacher meant,

*There’s a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now afloat,
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures.*¹⁷

Imagine Russel enunciating and internalising these words.

Russel shone in history too. His history teacher, Joey du Preez, made them memorise speeches and passages. “Russel was a very bright boy. And when I told him, ‘Go!’, he would make that speech.” Du Preez said he could depend on Russel, especially when the inspector came because “he knew more than the others”. The reports that reached home (Kroonstad) showed that “Russel loved books and was open to learning, and that he excelled in

14 Deon Botman interview (translated).

15 Ebrahim Rotkin, conversation notes, 20 August 2015 (translated).

16 Rudyard Kipling’s ‘If’ exhorts the boy to hold his head high and to serve others despite all the adversities life could throw at him, if he would become a man.

17 William Shakespeare, *Julius Ceasar* (Act IV, Scene 3).

school”.¹⁸ As Russel continued as monitor (class prefect), this teacher told him, “You are the shepherd. Do not lose any of yours.”¹⁹

Russel plunged into writing Afrikaans poems. Nine high school ones survived. He mused about a drought, about the fleeting nature of life, young love, a farewell. In Standard 9 (1970), he penned a poetic tribute to his retiring principal, Mr E Abdullah – “A leader, tender and good” who was, above all, “true to God and service”. Through these poems shine the themes of care for others and acknowledgment of God, but also that he had felt the pangs of teenage love. Religious themes, or at least allusions, often emanated from his pen. In a short story, for instance, cruel community members cast the stones of unforgiveness at a prodigal daughter (fresh from prison after an accidental homicide in an abusive situation).²⁰ The 16-year-old’s subtext in this case is powerfully suggestive: true Christians will forgive and embrace; hypocrites will stone the sinner to death.

Our high school student also sharpened his skills wherever he could. In the school’s debating society, he, Yasheen Bhayat and Patricia Martin (later Hartze) starred in the contests. Patricia recalled that “Russel was in the forefront of establishing a Drama and Debate Society at our school together with Yasheen Bhayat. They were both good public speakers. I joined them, not so much because of my ability as a public speaker (or at least not equal to theirs) but primarily because of our friendship. In fact, I was so enamoured by them [...] that I listened and learned from them while feeling important because I was part of their social circle.”²¹ Patricia added that in meetings “Russel shone forth as an excellent leader”.

At home Russel helped out with chores and with the children. “He looked after our four young children. He was very obedient and trustworthy.” “He was a homely chap,” his uncle added. “He was very quiet. He helped in the

18 Phebe Botman-Kerspuy, e-mail, 17 September 2015.

19 Joey du Preez, conversation notes, 16 September 2015 (translated).

20 Various poems and a short story, ‘Die Ongeluk op die Ongeluk’ [The Misfortune upon the Misfortune], in “Gedigte & Verhale & Sketse uit die Pen van RHB” [Poems & Stories & Sketches from the Pen of RHB], an A5 manuscript, Russel Botman Private Papers.

21 Patricia Hartze, e-mail, 18 September 2015 (translated).

house and did his homework. He rarely went out and when he did, it was on a Christian outing.”

Russel was not perfect, though. Outside of school he did get up to mischief. Unbeknownst to his uncle, he had formed a posse around himself. They agreed on a soft crime competition. His friends raided grocery shops and general dealers in the township to see who could steal the most packets of Sweet-Aid. Because Russel was considered “pious” and therefore to be protected, the foot soldiers did not allow him to participate in these sorties. He served instead as the “counting master” and would at the end of the weekend announce who had won that particular series of raids. It is not known what prize the winner bagged.²²

The boy’s uncommon piety and his penchant to quote from the Bible and to recite poems got him noticed school-wide. In 1969, two years after starting at Kliptown, Russel approached the principal, Mr E Abdullah, and with his blessing founded the Society of Christian Students. He became its first chairman. Organising and orchestrating this society came easily. He had had his apprenticeship at home and in the Kinderbond in Heatherdale. Thus, at age 15, Russel showed himself a self-starter who took initiative, one who organised outside of the comfortable bounds of family and home.

The year 1971 found Russel in Standard 10, a matriculation candidate. The staff had all along noticed his leadership qualities and made him head boy. At the beginning of the year, the matric biology teacher walked into a classroom filled with very rowdy learners swinging from the rafters. After giving his matric charges a tongue-lashing, he told them he would not teach them. They, being hooligans, could teach themselves. He forthwith proceeded to write the work scheme for the year on the blackboard. This teacher meant it and that year read his newspaper when he was supposed to teach. Russel thus “taught” himself biology.²³

22 Beryl Botman interview. Beryl heard this anecdote directly from Russel.

23 Beryl Botman interview. Anecdote related by her. While this story may be apocryphal, I accept it as credible, because from personal experience I can say that this happened in my high school too.

Russel had already applied for admission as a student to the University of the Western Cape (UWC) in August.²⁴ He wanted in. After all, his father had studied at this institution and he heard many pleasant stories about the place. He envisaged a career in research (Plant and Animal Science).²⁵

His September results could be characterised as fair. He obtained scores ranging from 53% to 68% in five subjects, while scraping through in the sixth, Maths, with 40%. At the end of the year, he obtained the senior certificate with a provisional exemption. In order to obtain a full exemption, which would allow him to study for a degree, Russel had to pass mathematics (which he failed in the finals). The indifferent results notwithstanding, letters of support bolstered Russel's application.

His principal, Robert Marks, promised: "He should make a success of his studies."²⁶ The vice-principal, Alfred McBride, described Russel as "sincere and dedicated", and expansively added, "He is the chairman of the Society of Christian Students and has, since he was elected, carried out his official duties in a manner that demanded respect and attention, not only from the Society's members but [also] from teachers and his fellow students. His ability to organise is to be admired." In addition, McBride wrote, Russel served as head prefect. The letter concluded that "Hayman is deserving of praise and admiration".²⁷

Russel's pastor, a minister from Witwatersrand South, wrote, "He [Russel] was of noble character, faithful to his work, comes from a religious home, has a humble and quiet personality and is of assistance with teaching religious education in the congregation." To this the pastor added, "The urge to be of service is very strong [in Russel]. Interested in his fellow man, especially in the spiritual advancement of the youth."²⁸ To summarise: This spiritual

24 The University College of the Western Cape received university status in 1970 and became known as the University of the Western Cape (UWC).

25 Application of acceptance as student (Russel Botman), 23 August 1971 (translated), HR Botman Student File, University of the Western Cape Archives.

26 Principal Mr [Robert] Marks, note, 25 October 1971 (translated), HR Botman Student File.

27 Testimonial of A McBride, Vice-Principal, Kliptown High School (translated), HR Botman Student File.

28 Testimonial of Ds CC Kannemeyer (Witwatersrand South), 25 October 1971 (translated), HR Botman Student File.

leader saw Russel as noble, faithful, humble, helpful, service-oriented and interested in the spiritual upliftment of the youth.

OFF TO VARSITY

In early February 1972, Russel's parents put him on a train bound for Bellville. "He was put on the train and he just had to go – with a suitcase and a basket in his hand," his baby sister, then eight years old, remembered.²⁹ He arrived in Bellville South and walked from door to door until he found lodgings near the railway line. With the closure of the train door at Kroonstad station, Russel's youth came to an end, and with the opening of the boarding house's door on Brand Street, he was ushered into his student years.

So it came to be that the unassuming Russel Botman – domestic manager, counting master, youth leader, poet, student and head boy – first registered as a student at the University College of the Western Cape.

That February, the peaceful campus lay enveloped in 27 degrees. The Desmond Demas tie-affair (1970), although fresh in the memory of the senior students on campus, had made way for first-year excitement and eagerness to meet life and to acquire new knowledge. Botman immersed himself in his studies – Botany, Zoology, Physiology, and Chemistry. In March that year, he wrote the matric mathematics supplementary examination and passed.

Russel failed BSc I, though.³⁰ He immediately sought re-admission, this time as BA student. He also sought clarity about his full exemption,³¹ as the certificate had not yet reached him and the university was requesting it. The Registrar replied that his certificate of full exemption had not yet been received, and reminded him that his provisional exemption expired in March 1973.³²

29 Grace Koetaan interview, Roodepoort, 18 July 2015 (translated).

30 From my observations and conversations, I learned that many, if not most, first-year science students at UWC failed.

31 HR Botman to Registrar, undated but before 5 December 1972 (translated), HR Botman Student File.

32 Registrar to HR Botman, 11 Desember 1972 (translated), HR Botman Student File.

UNREST AT UWC (1973)

The University re-admitted Russel without this provisional exemption certificate on the proviso that he had to produce it as soon as possible. Russel was now a first-year BA (Admission) student. Soon enough, his fellow students elected him as chairman of the Theological Association.

More good news was that the University admitted him to its men's accommodation. But should he fail, the letter said, he would not be re-admitted to the hostel. Russel immediately replied and asked if he could apply for a place in the Theology School hostel.³³ Clearly, he knew where he wanted to be. He was allocated a room.

One of the students who met Russel in 1973 was Andy Gradwell, by then a veteran student and activist on campus.³⁴ Andy walked on the wild side. Some called him "Doekies the Dragon", others admired him as a fiery secular radical, and still others feared him as a bare-chest brawler. Andy remembered that Russel was a calm chap. That he dressed neatly. "I saw him as a stand-up guy, like a little [school] master."³⁵ Physically, Russel was slim, rakish even, and he sported a neat, small afro. Often, a curious smile would creep over his face.

Russel always wore a jacket, never a windbreaker like the other rebels. He donned a coat to protect him against the wet winters of the Cape. "Russel had this coat, a khaki coat, the one that was worn by detectives. He wore a sporting flat cap and in winter always carried an umbrella. He very much looked the part," a student friend said.³⁶

At that time, early in 1973, these young men often sauntered over to Modderdam Road, jumped the low chicken-wire fence, and held discussions on the pavement under one of the street lights. In these pavement conversations "Port Elizabeth guys, Josters, Durbanites, South West Africa

33 HR Botman to Registrar, 24 January 1973 (translated), HR Botman Student File.

34 Although Andy Gradwell boarded off-campus (in Lavistown), he often squatted in a friend's hostel room and socialised with the hostelites, therefore he had intimate knowledge of the events on campus. Moreover, he had been studying at UWC, on and off, since 1969.

35 Andy Gradwell interview, Port Elizabeth, 22 August 2015 (translated).

36 G Allen Grootboom interview, Cape Town, 6 July 2105 (translated).

guys, and those from the country discussed politics; the government thing; stories about our home towns; unequal education,” Andy said.³⁷ Why out there on the sidewalk? The atmosphere in the hostels was “very strict; there were too many rules”, he explained. Talk of Bush College, where they perforce studied, also riddled the pavement conversations. Andy further related that “Russel had opinions about everything. He was a reserved, cool type of guy who would first listen and then speak. But when he spoke, he was clear about what he thought and what should be done.”

From the pavement conversations Russel graduated to occasional participation in the debates of the leftist Open Dialogue Society. This semi-secret society held cheap wine and cheese “symposiums” on campus. Russel did not belong to this society but often attended sessions and “shared his ideas”.³⁸

Later that year, the Bush was embroiled in undulating unrest. The Student Representative Council (SRC) constitution was revoked and its leadership expelled. An Action Committee formed in its place and UWC gave them the boot too. The students rallied around their leaders and made moves to take the University to court. Finally, hundreds of students walked off with the intention of closing this University as a creation of apartheid once and for all. Some, realising they would not be allowed to study elsewhere in South Africa, returned and re-registered.

Russel either did not walk off, or he did and promptly returned. By this time “he felt called”.³⁹ He felt strongly that he had been called to the ministry. He would study. The “wasted” 1972 lingered in his mind. Moreover, his parents were funding his studies. Those who returned to campus and re-registered were vilified by those who wished to put a period to the institution’s existence. The walk-off decimated the Class of 1973. Some would never return to study – anywhere; others, battle scarred, returned in 1974 on the back of promises they did not mean to keep.

37 Andy Gradwell interview (translated).

38 Andy Gradwell interview (translated).

39 Nico Botha interview, Pretoria, 16 July 2015 (translated).

Russel, however, plunged into his studies in the second half of 1973, and penned some poetry too. In seven surviving poems from this time he tussled with tenets of religion on the one hand and with unrequited love on the other.⁴⁰ Be that as it may, come December 1973, Russel found that he had passed BA (Admission) I.

THE YEAR OF CALMNESS

Early in 1974 our BA II student received a letter from UWC. The bursary committee had awarded him some funding – R100 as a bursary, R100 as a loan – and said, “You are requested to report to the Cashier (Room No. 115) as soon as possible in order to complete the necessary forms of agreement.”⁴¹ Also, he had again secured space in the Theology School hostel.

This year of innocence, 1974, found a vibrant Russel. In class, he spun out ideas. He asked questions, proffered opinions. He read extensively. He bought books on Long Street “even when he did not have much money”. He participated in debates, including in the Open Dialogue Society and in the hostels. His opening gambit invariably was, “The problem I have with what you are saying is...” Then, said a fellow *tokkelok*,⁴² he would proceed to point out what was wrong with an opponent’s position before putting his own argument on the table.⁴³

In October 1974, Russel applied for re-admission to the Theology School hostel for 1975. The University approved his application, adding, “on condition that you have been promoted to the next study year of your course and your promotion is not subject to the passing of an additional exam.”⁴⁴ The proviso that a supplementary examination would disqualify him must have annoyed Russel. After all, passing a supplementary examination meant passing the course(s) within the rules.

40 See “Gedigte & Verhale & Sketse uit die Pen van RHB”.

41 Registrar to HR Botman, undated but circa October 1974 (translated), HR Botman Student File.

42 “*Tokkelok*” is an Afrikaans neologism referring to a theology student.

43 Nico Botha interview (translated).

44 Registrar to HR Botman, undated (translated), HR Botman Student File.

Russel also showed his soft side in 1974. He continued to pen poetry; some of the poems indicate that he was a dreamer disturbed:

*Must I always soar in my dreams,
Until reality chases it away?*⁴⁵

Others strongly suggest that he was lonely and often secretly in love – “I live here enveloped in my love-solitude”.⁴⁶ Still other poems indicate that he interrogated history and questioned God and biblical figures. He also found himself plagued by contradictions that screamed:

*There's power in politics
riots in relationships
There's hope in revolution
trust in nuclear power*⁴⁷

Beyond attending classes, analysing lectures and engaging in the pavement conversations, Russel's life unfolded in the seclusion of his mind. He almost certainly experienced existential angst and internal conflict, as suggested by his poetry and as was the wont of almost any young man aged 19–21.

THE CROSS-OVER YEAR (1975)

By 1975, Russel was at home on the humanities front. His class mates, I included, found him “adept at Afrikaans”. He especially mastered “sintaksis” – the analysis of sentence structures. In this regard, he did particularly well in Ikey van der Rhee's class. He enjoyed literature also – poetry, drama and prose – often asking critical questions.

The students held a rush of mass meetings that year. Russel soon realised he had to improve his spoken English because the students had decided, in these meetings, to conduct the struggle through this medium.

The students elected a new SRC. They did this after the student unrest of 1973, which resulted in there not being an SRC on this campus in 1974.

45 Translated from Afrikaans.

46 Translated from Afrikaans.

47 Various poems in “Gedigte & Verhale & Sketse uit die Pen van RHB”.

Also, in 1975, a new rector, Professor Richard van der Ross, came on board as the first “black” rector of the institution.⁴⁸ He promised the students a university “second to none”. The students negotiated with him and they agreed that an SRC would be in order. In the August 1975 election campaign, candidates offered manifestos in mass meetings in N7, the largest lecture room on the campus.

Russel Botman made it onto the executive committee, the portfolio of Public Relations Officer being entrusted to him.⁴⁹ Andy Gradwell reckoned the elected members assigned him to this position because “he was an up and coming leader who had that style that could calm people down, no matter how rough the situation”. He added, “Russel’s leadership style was not to instruct; it was: You first ask, then you lead. It did not matter how bad a situation was, he could change it for the better.”⁵⁰

While a number of theology students were included in the student leadership, the body leaned strongly over to black consciousness. Russel did not belong to the SASO Western Cape branch. In that outfit, Alan Liebenberg, Robbie Wood, Tony da Silva, Garnett Godden and Ike Grant were dynamic and vocal, pushing black consciousness. This did not phase Russel.

Kenny Mathews of the class of 1973 alleged that after the debacle of that year, the secular radicals by agreement stepped back to give the leadership to the *tokkelokke*⁵¹ – Richard Stevens, Howard Eybers, Leonardo Appies and Russel Botman. A leadership consisting of theology students would make the student movement more acceptable, the secular radicals argued.

At this time, Russel was an ideological eclecticist. He obviously embraced Christianity and showed it in his daily comings and goings. And his performance debates and his studies showed that he drew from various

48 Professor Van der Ross was a coloured in the nomenclature of the apartheid state. At this time, the students rejected the term in preference to an inclusive one, “black”, which meant “the politically oppressed”.

49 *Unibel* (August 1975) 1(2):6.

50 Andy Gradwell interview (translated). Years on, Russel’s brother-in-law, Quintin Koetaan, said, “Russel wanted to take everyone with him. He did not want to ‘lose’ anyone.”

51 Kenny Mathews interview, Pietermaritzburg, 1 March 2012.

ideologies. He also embraced plays and poems carrying secular themes. Coming from the big city, he introduced the country boys on campus to playwright Gibson Kente and poets Wally Serote and Sipho Sepamla.⁵² He listened to the ideas of black consciousness, black theology and liberation theology. He lent Marxism an unsympathetic ear. Indeed, Russel read everything from fairytales to tomes on historical materialism.⁵³ He was certainly taken with the non-violent, direct action struggle of Martin Luther King Jr's civil rights movement. He had been seen reading King's *Why We Can't Wait*⁵⁴ and often listened to Dr King's "I Have a Dream" speech on a long-playing (LP) record.⁵⁵

He refused to be swept off his feet by any one ideological wind. That does not mean he had certainty. Capitalist-apartheid South Africa seethed as too complex a concoction for simple solutions. Russel urged those in power to "Open up the vaults of History / Uncover the horrible truth in your sewage."⁵⁶ He thus challenged or would challenge oppression, any form of evil really, by using religion, culture, ideologies and history.

On 7 September 1975, the SRC brought the dissident theologian Beyers Naudé to UWC to address the students. Russel would have supported this visit, bringing a dissident voice to campus. It was also the opening of the Coloured Persons Representative Council that day and a bunch of activists protested against this. The police arrested some of the picketers. They clubbed the rest, scattering them. These students then burst into lecture hall N7 to tell their tale of anger, including that some students had been brutally flung into police trucks. This moment of rage precluded the Beyers Naudé address from happening. Here, in this particular moment perhaps, the soft approach of interrogating apartheid intellectually and confronting it directly on the frontline of the struggle came face to face. Here, perhaps, Russel too arrived at a complex moment.

52 Nico Botha interview.

53 Beryl Botman interview.

54 Nico Botha interview.

55 G Allen Grootboom interview.

56 'Herinner Jou SA' [Remind you SA], in "Gedigte & Verhale & Sketse uit die Pen van RHB" (translated).

Towards the end of 1975, Russel made a bold move on the academic front. He applied for admission to do the BA Honours degree in Biblical Studies because he expected to pass Biblical Studies III, even though he had not met all the requirements of the BA degree. He explained: "My application for admittance to the Biblical Science Honours Class for 1976 is the product of an intense interest in Biblical Science as presented by the University. I want to keep in contact with Biblical Science while I continue with my Theological course at the Faculty of Theology of the University during the same year, 1976. I have a special interest in the archaeological and text-critical findings with regard to my subject field and would very much like to expand my knowledge regarding these aspects."⁵⁷

Shortly after, Russel's examination results, Biblical Science III (a C) and Psychology III (an F), showed that he had played too ambitious a hand. The University swiftly implemented the letter of its rules. Firstly, it informed the hapless Russel that his application for re-admission to the hostel was unsuccessful. Moreover, the institution informed him, "Unfortunately I have to inform you your application to register for the Honours Degree Studies in Biblical Science in 1976 at this university has been turned down."⁵⁸

YEAR OF FIRE (1976)

Russel entered 1976 in a disconsolate mood. Having been turned down to study BA Honours in Biblical Studies, he was determined to complete the BA degree. The record is rather silent about his studies during the first semester of 1976. Then, in June, the clouds that lifted in 1974 and part of 1975 again packed darkly above him. He was reminded that his room and board as well as tuition fees were in arrears by R215,00. The University informed him, "If you fail to settle the full amount before 18 June 1976, the University will have no other choice but to suspend your lodging as well as the attendance of classes."⁵⁹ A total student debt of R215,00 constituted

57 HR Botman to Registrar, 31 October 1975 (translated), HR Botman Student File.

58 AF Daniels, Assistant Registrar (Student Affairs), to HR Botman, 18 Desember 1975 (translated), HR Botman Student File.

59 Registrar to HR Botman, unspecified date (translated), HR Botman Student File.

a massive amount, and one can imagine sacrifices had to be made on the homefront to settle it.

During the June-July vacation, UWC students discussed the outbreak of violence in Soweto on 16 June in their dispersed home towns. When they returned to their campus in late July, they worked up to a mass meeting.

The first meeting, on Thursday 29 July, dealing with Soweto, found the students uncertain, tentative. Eventually, SRC member Ike Grant mustered courage and said, “I move in the light of the events in Soweto and other black townships that we ... boycott classes for one week ... and mourn the dead in Soweto and those killed elsewhere.”⁶⁰

The student mass held its collective breath. Then Russel Botman interjected and asserted: “I distance myself from that suggestion. To mourn boils down to sympathy and a revolutionist needs no sympathy but concrete support.”⁶¹ Russel’s intensity and tone shifted mental universes from softly reactive to sharply provocative, I thought at the time. He asked for a forward-looking commitment to change, for the student body to align itself with revolution – not merely an emotional response to a specific outrage. It seemed that Botman, perhaps taking his cue from the willingness of the students to actively protest, to physically confront the state, as in the picketing at the opening of the Coloured Persons Representative Council in September 1975, now sought to move the student body off a coloured stage and onto a national one.

That night, unbeknownst to the general student body, Appies, Botman and other *tokkelokke* discussed what was to be done.⁶²

Friday, 30 July. The *tokkelokke* proposed and the students voted to boycott classes for one week and hold a series of symposia. The boycott would

60 Thomas CC, *Wakker Wakker en aan die Brand: Waarneminge van ’n Studente-aktivis, UWC, 1976* [Wide Awake and on Fire: Observations of a Student Activist, UWC, 1976], Cape Town: Mayibuye Books, 1997, 30 (translated).

61 Fellow student Danny Titus heard, “Vir wat moet ek bid? ’n Revolusionêr het nie gebede nodig nie, hy het aksie nodig” [What should I pray for? A revolutionary doesn’t need prayers, he needs action]. Translated from Afrikaans. <http://www.litnet.co.za/ons-het-ons-verlede-vergeet/>

62 Nico Botha interview. Botha participated in this meeting.

include the weekend of 31 July to 1 August also. “It was the theological students who strongly advanced a boycott of classes in solidarity with black students elsewhere in the country, as a nonviolent strategy of resistance.”⁶³

The students in the mass meeting also decided to enter lecture rooms where the 2 o’clock lectures were already in progress to inform those students of the decision. After the meeting, Botman led a procession to the Arts buildings to do just this. Peter Gelderbloem and Abe Visagie, also *tokkelokke*, flanked him. He distinctly told them, “We simply take over.”⁶⁴ He was a young man – thin, dark and intense. I did not know him, but I could tell he knew what he wanted. Of course, I could not tell then and I cannot know now what exactly he meant, but the conviction with which he uttered those words impressed me. Maybe he firmly believed that we could take over the campus, the university! This statement, coupled with his rhetoric of revolution the day before, suggests a longer term “project”. Member of the Open Dialogue Society, Andy Gradwell, did not hear this comment, but when I put it to him, he said: “At that point Russel realised that persuasion was not enough, and he moved from persuasion to power, to the exercise of power.”⁶⁵ Indeed, there ambled about campus a militant lot (self-proclaimed Marxists, utopian anarchists and a motley of left-wing radicals) who insisted on action to exacerbate the crisis in the country. Andy reckoned that Russel wanted to accommodate the militants too in “the movement”. That afternoon, a set boycotters led by Russel duly informed the students in Room 20 of the decision of “the mass”.⁶⁶

Then a series of symposiums, starting on Monday, 2 August, ensued. Strangely, Russel did not show for these debates. Next, on the afternoon of 4 August, the students held a poster demonstration that turned violent and resulted in a tense stand-off with the police. That night, unknown persons,

63 Nico Botha, ‘The Voice of Protest within the Dutch Reformed Mission Church 1976–1986’, in MA Plaatjies-Van Huffel & R Vosloo (eds), *Reformed Churches in South Africa and the Struggle for Justice: Remembering 1960–1990*, Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 2013, 77.

64 Personal knowledge. Then a second-year History student, I walked behind the three theology students as the procession bore down on Room 20 in the Arts building. See Thomas, *Wakker Wakker*, 35 (translated).

65 Andy Gradwell interview (translated).

66 Three other groups informed students in other large lecture halls.

presumably students, torched a temporary building that housed a number of offices.

The morning after the arson incident, Russel attended the mass meeting. He did not speak, though. Abe Visagie found it strange that the petrol bombs found in the Administration Building were not ignited, “As I see the matter, I don’t believe that the fire was the work of students.”⁶⁷ After the mass meeting, said Gradwell, “the Organising Committee of Seven” held an emergency meeting.⁶⁸ He recalled Botman urging them to double their efforts to get the movement back onto the non-violent track. He heard Russel distinctly saying, “Remember, we are not fighting against buildings; we are fighting against the apartheid system.”⁶⁹

After the week of symposiums, the mass voted to continue the boycott. The student leadership then started brainstorming about a contextual position paper. Gradwell remembered that the “committee” intended this pamphlet as “a SAM missile to be sent into society”. The writing of the text took place over three to four days – from 7 August to the early morning of 10 August. Botman did not attend all the sessions. He put in an appearance on the last day or two.

Early in the morning of 10 August, someone took the text through to SS Printers on Belgravia Road in Athlone. Later, about noon, the student leaders drove “in a rally” to pick up the boxes of blue pamphlets. Then, as they were loading, the sound of sirens became audible in the distance. In the yard of the printing shop, Andy Gradwell said he urged Botman to get into his car but Russel and Peter (Gelderbloem) frantically motioned to him to reverse out of the yard and get away. This Andy duly did, and Botman and Gelderbloem disappeared from his sight. Prompting Gradwell about Russel’s decision not to join him, he said: “Russel was a rather fearful

67 Thomas, *Wakker Wakker*, 70 (translated).

68 Gradwell A, ‘1976, a Watershed Year in My Life’, in C Thomas (ed), *Finding Freedom in the Bush of Books: The UWC Experience and Spirit*, East London: Wendy’s Book Lounge, 2010, 131; Andy Gradwell interview.

69 Andy Gradwell interview. The Committee of Seven consisted of Leonardo Appies, Johan Evertse, Peter Gelderbloem, Abe Visagie, Henry Matthys, Russel Botman and Andy Gradwell. Vernon Balie and James Buys also attended some of the sessions.

guy. When things got tough, he removed himself from the situation.”⁷⁰ This seemed to apply only on the physical front, Andy added. On the battlefield of ideas Russel never backed off. “He went fearlessly to the front to make the playing field level for us students.” About this, another student said, “Russel was a cautious person. He wouldn’t jump if he didn’t know where he would land.”⁷¹

Out on Belgravia, ahead and to the rear, Andy now saw squad cars, police vans and riot trucks, and road blocks being set up. Thinking on his feet, he deftly eased his blue Dodge Avenger into the nearest parking bay. He crossed the street and entered a pharmacy. He looked around and bought a toothbrush. He saw a policeman standing at his car, but with his back to the car. Andy walked over and asked what was going on, and could the officer guide him out. This the officer duly did and waved him through the roadblock a short distance on.

On 10 and 11 August, the students distributed the blue pamphlets throughout the Western Cape, and even as far as Port Elizabeth. On the 11th, Nico Botha hiked to the Boland town of Worcester with a backpack full of pamphlets, which he distributed there. The next day, 12 August, massive violence, perpetrated by the UWC and Bellville Training College students, erupted on Modderdam Road, the arterial road that speeds past the university. In the course of the stoning of cars, a 17 kilogram rock badly injured an old white lady. Russel did not participate in this demonstration. Afterwards, in private conversation with Gradwell, he expressed grave reservations about the afternoon’s violence, saying: “We should not be going about hurting innocent people.” Russel might as well have invoked Mark Antony – “O judgement! Thou art fled to brutish beasts, / and men have lost their reason.”⁷² Gradwell added that Russel believed in “the Jesus approach of passive resistance”.⁷³

70 Andy Gradwell interview (translated).

71 G Allen Grootboom interview (translated).

72 William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar* (Act III, Scene 2).

73 Andy Gradwell interview (translated).

On the night of the 12th and also the next day, some 27 students were either picked up for interrogation or detained. According to the campus grapevine, the security police had nabbed Botman and Gelderbloem on 14 August. Gradwell said he himself spent 90 days in detention. According to Nico Botha, the security police did indeed detain Russel, albeit for only a short while.⁷⁴

ON THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FRONT

We must dip back in time and perhaps move sideways, though, because there was more to Russel than student politics. Russel embraced healthy socio-cultural activities also.

Throughout his undergraduate years, Russel Botman can be said to have expressed the deeper part of his mission through his participation in the Vereniging van Christen Studente (VCS). The VCS was a well-attended student organisation, a space of spiritual solace for young Christians – especially for those from “up country”.⁷⁵ This student organisation endeavoured to live the motto “Maak Jesus Koning”, meaning: make Jesus King.

The Dutch Reformed Mission Church encouraged the theology students to establish chapters on campuses nation-wide. This the *tokkelokke* at UWC duly did. Singing and praying suffused VCS meetings and often snacks and tea surfaced for free. Eleanor Gradwell, née Hendricks, said she attended the gatherings because “They always had nice things like pies or samoosas. I don’t know where it came from; it was just there.”

The VCS also served as a space in which to meet other young people, to scout for potential dates, as it were. Mostly *tokkelokke* and female social work students attended meetings. A few informants ventured that the church wanted their dominees to marry social workers and thus encouraged VCS socials – of which many took place on campus and in “die Saaltjie” [small hall] in Bellville South.

74 Nico Botha interview.

75 The first article of faith praxis in coloured culture is that they live through Christianity.

Occasionally, this student society ventured far from campus, including on outings and picnics to towns and hamlets in the Boland, Overberg and South Cape. Russel and Appies were the main organisers of these excursions. The most dramatic outreach “programme”, however, unfolded after the VCS had formed the Intra Muros Drama Group, which took various short plays on fundraising tours.⁷⁶

The group gave Russel the responsibility to manage the money. Having had to take care of the “bread” money back home and having served as the “count master” in high school, Russel took easily to this task. One student related that Russel once (in 1973 during the campus unrest) asked him to walk with him to a bank in Bellville. “I thought maybe he would buy us something to eat [on the way back], so I went with him.” After queueing a long time, “Russel withdrew a rand. And I knew that there is no way that he was going to buy my a cool drink. And needless to say, he didn’t.” He then bought an envelope and a stamp “and we returned to the university without anything to quench our thirst”. This showed that Russel was “particular or meticulous” about money matters. “He was not a spendthrift.”⁷⁷ Years on, one of his siblings said, “He realised the value of money but didn’t sell his soul for it.”⁷⁸

The VCS took several plays on tour – in some years one per quarter. Two of the earliest plays on tour were ‘The elder’ and ‘The hand He once took’.⁷⁹

One year the group organised a national tour! Russel’s fellow *tokkelokke* Nico Botha and Andrew Philips considered this trip a bold move, it having been a heterosexual male-female tour party with sleepovers involved and unsupervised by the church. In the context of the conservative times, this might have been considered revolutionary. The church fathers might have considered this a challenge, even an affront.

76 Russel was signatory to the bank account of the Intra Muros Drama Group.

77 G Allen Grootboom interview (translated).

78 Grace Koetaan interview (translated).

79 Andrew Phillips interview, Pretoria, 16 July 2015 (translated).

“At this time Professor [EH] Holzapfel was the kingpin in the Theology School, and he was dead set against the tour. I can almost hear ole Russel saying: ‘No, no; let Holzie say what he wants to say; but we are doing this trip!’”⁸⁰ The trip duly went ahead. The national tour included Bloemfontein, Johannesburg and Durban, with its last show in East London. At one point during the tour, *tokkelok* Dawid Loff’s father died. Russel then prevailed on the tour company to donate some of the proceeds to the Loff family.⁸¹

The VCS chapters were meant to be a national movement, much like the University Christian Movement at the liberal white universities. In the period 1975 to 1977, Russel, who saw his mission unfolding in a broader context than UWC, participated in the conversation to establish a national VCS body. The organising committee of this envisaged national body invited him to the inaugural meeting in 1977, saying: “Since your presence is of major importance to this meeting, we are cordially inviting you to attend it.”⁸² This meeting duly adopted a constitution – the Regulations of the National Student Committee. Here Russel first stepped onto a national stage. In 1979, Russel became the chairperson of the National Leaders Forum of the Association of Christian Students.

But before that he had had to negotiate the complex intensities of August-September 1976.

EXPELLED!

At this time, 18 August 1976, just as the boycotts started losing momentum, Allan Boesak appeared dramatically on the scene and gave a presentation titled ‘The Role of the Church in the Black Struggle’.⁸³ Boesak, fresh from his studies in the Netherlands, joined Professor Jaap Durand as a theological and political mentor of the *tokkelokke*. The snappily dressed Boesak sparkled with charisma and oozed a kind of Martin Luther King Jr eloquence.

80 Nico Botha interview (translated).

81 Andrew Phillips interview.

82 HG Gabriels to R Botman, 10 August 1977 (translated), Russel Botman Private Papers.

83 Thomas, *Wakker Wakker*, 130.

Boesak did not impress Russel, said Nico Botha. “To Russel, Boesak was not radical enough. And Russel was not taken in by flamboyance.”⁸⁴ This may have been so on a personal level. On the ideological front, though, Russel did follow Boesak.

Responding to Boesak’s speech, the secular radicals rejected the role of the church, saying it sought to lull them into acceptance of authority and diverted them from bread and butter issues. Botman saw it differently. He accepted that the role of the church was to liberate the poor and the oppressed, not only from oppression but also from poverty. A contemporary student, Andrew Esterhuysen, said that Boesak influenced all of them, including Russel, to have “the confidence to take part in the prophetic process”.⁸⁵

Appies and Botman thus became Boesak’s underlings. “Indeed,” said Gradwell, “they were the leading guys who spread Allan Boesak’s ideas on the campus.” Russel accepted that the struggle had to be conducted theologically, through the church. During the crisis of 1976, the church became a “rendezvous for radicals”, and indeed “a natural platform for political gatherings” to him.⁸⁶

Then unexpected news blind-sided Russel. In September 1976, UWC expelled him. Unlike expelled secular radicals’ cases, the University afforded him the right to appeal. No letter of expulsion could be found, so we do not know for certain the reason for his expulsion. He attended the disciplinary hearing on 8 October. Fellow *tokkelok* Nico Botha was also expelled and the committee heard him that same day. Said Botha: “Some theological students, for example Russel Botman and others, paid the price for their involvement in the campus struggle by being expelled from the university.”⁸⁷

With regard to their activism, being leaders who encouraged the 1976 action, both Russel and Nico stood their ground. As they dueled with

84 Nico Botha interview (translated).

85 Nico Botha interview (translated), quoting Andrew Esterhuysen.

86 Andy Gradwell interview (translated).

87 Botha, ‘The Voice of Protest’, 77.

the committee, they did not admit to any wrong-doing. They put it to the committee that, yes, they still felt “called” to the ministry, but they refused to relinquish their political understanding of apartheid or their justification for their activism. Afterwards, committee member Pat Sonn was overheard saying, “Those two guys just came here to act clever.”⁸⁸ A week later the University wrote to Russel saying, “This is to confirm, as was already orally conveyed to you on 8 October, that the Disciplinary Committee of the Board has upheld your temporary suspension by the Rector [...] and has prolonged it to the end of this year.”⁸⁹

Devastation, indeed. But not all of 1976 was lost to him. Russel somehow retained part of his “duly performance” mark (DP).⁹⁰

After the violence of 12 August and the detentions and arrests of 12–14 August, the boycott had limped on, on and off and unofficially, until 20 September. When the DP lists appeared in mid-October, he found he had earned exemption from having to write New Testament I and Dogmatology I in the final examination.⁹¹ This meant that he might have returned to lectures sometime after mid-August. Did he have his Hamlet moment? He could have written tests and could have completed his assignments. Was this against the spirit of the student movement? Russel’s comrades Appies, Gelderbloem and Gradwell languished in detention until at least mid-November; three UWC firebrands – Rudolph Knight, Frank Coutries and Lesley Seleka – had been convicted and imprisoned on Robben Island. Lists of students had been expelled without leave to appeal. On the flipside, it must be conceded that for most of the students the boycott had expired by 15 August. Russel may well have returned to lectures and this would have been reasonable to some, questionable to others.

After the disciplinary hearing Russel tumbled down an emotional abyss. He cast his eyes to the mountains but found no solace there. As he put it:

88 Nico Botha interview (translated).

89 Registrar HJ Pienaar to HR Botman, 13 October 1976 (translated), HR Botman Student File.

90 If a student obtained 55% and more as a mark for the year’s tests and assignments, the student was exempted from writing the examination.

91 Certified Statement, [issued by the] Registrar, 19 October 1977 (translated), HR Botman Student File.

*Listen my ear, sharpen your senses now!
Search for my heart, search for a Mountain Voice!
God, the Mountains are now keeping quiet?*

Indeed, Russel found himself surrounded by loneliness. Uncertainty gnawed at his soul and he noted “doubt about total future”. And at one point, he must have been driving to the beach, he murmured:

*I trust in the water
And believe in its words.
I would rather listen to you.
Voice that doesn't lie like people do.*⁹²

This stanza from the poem “Geen Bedrog” [No Treachery] suggests betrayal, maybe that a student had reported him for the disruption of classes. If so, Russel would have seen his “disruption” of a particular class as an instance of informing the attending students of the decision of the mass meeting that all students should boycott classes. We will not know now if he “disrupted” other classes, but this would have been out of character.

Russel now disappeared from circulation and plunged into the world of door-to-door sales – to make money and perhaps also to serve as therapy. In October and November 1976, he sold black and white television sets and funeral policies. And clothing, to wit, Drewton's lingerie! He quickly learned about the cost implications of hire purchase agreements. “He could not reconcile that he was selling the people these televisions at those ridiculously high prices [with his own morality]. And so he stopped that.”⁹³ At the same time he did church work in Stellenbosch and Bishop Lavis.

Russel wrestled with his expulsion. How would he face his father; what would he tell him.

But then there was Lizzie Abrahams, a social work student from De Rust near Oudtshoorn in the South Cape, with whom he had fallen deeply in love in 1975. In October through November 1976 especially, she supported

92 ‘Geen Bedrog’ [No Treachery], in “Gedigte & Verhale & Sketse uit die Pen van RHB” (translated).

93 Beryl Botman interview.

him while he lugged his burdens. When, in the beginning of November, she prepared to go to her parental home, he reached a philosophical high and an emotional low. “Tomorrow everything will be like this again [...] / But you will be gone ...”

In early December 1976, Lizzie, surely sensing his pain, wrote him a poem:

*Every day started with a cloudless heaven
Because every day started with the most precious name
always Russel
Sometimes we were alone and sometimes we were one!*⁹⁴

Before he left for home, now in the forgotten Karoo town of Marydale (where his father had obtained a position), Russel visited the office of the Registrar. This office, maybe Assistant Registrar Abe Daniels himself,⁹⁵ told him to write a letter. This is not confirmed, but perhaps the office advised him to apologise for 1976 and to promise that he would refrain from political activity.⁹⁶ Russel fired off a cocky one-line letter – “I am hereby applying for re-admission to the university for 1977.”⁹⁷

This note could be read as a challenge to the University and the apartheid government behind it to just try to deny him admission. Russel’s state of mind was one of determination, one of standing his ground. He would not be humiliated into making promises that might run contrary to his conscience. And he insisted on his right to study.

The hot quiescence of the Karoo hamlet afforded Russel an opportunity to grow calm and to reflect. A long time after this, he told a confidante that Marydale had offered him distance from the hurly burly of university,

94 ‘Net vir Jou’ [Just for you], in “Gedigte & Verhale & Sketse uit die Pen van RHB” (translated).

95 I was also expelled in 1976. I had to talk to Abe Daniels before I was allowed to re-register. Russel had to write a letter.

96 UWC activist Jean Swanson, who was expelled in 1973, had to apologise and make a similar promise in 1974.

97 HR Botman to Registrar, 3 December 1976 (translated), HR Botman Student File.

student politics and being young in a big city. “It offered him an opportunity to rethink his life and to focus anew on his goals.”⁹⁸

It would have been a difficult time for the young man, knowing that he had messed up.⁹⁹ But the rebel in him refused to relent. That Christmas, while they visited the grandparents in Rooipos in the Northern Cape, the Botman family held a Christmas service with the farm workers. The farm owner arrived that afternoon and summoned the workers to a Christmas service which he had arranged for them. In the circle of the family, Russel stood up and said that this should not be allowed; they had already had a Christmas service; the workers should not go. Russel’s grandmother hushed him, reportedly saying, “You will be going away, but these people must stay here on the farm. Don’t make matters more difficult for them.”¹⁰⁰ Russel accepted his granny’s counsel, but it is easy to think that he grumbled and walked away with a dark cloud in his heart.

In late December 1976, he wrote:

*The pulpit staggers,
The theology topples.*¹⁰¹

He struggled with himself, conflicted and searching, confessing:

*... I want to be in my created form
But my other me still denies me
(Lord, I am doubly ill)
I want to turn my other cheek
And bless those who curse me
But then the second me has already cursed.*¹⁰²

98 Quintin Koetaan interview (translated).

99 None of Russel’s siblings could remember if he told their parents that he had been expelled in 1976. Interviews of 18 July 2015.

100 Beryl Botman interview (translated).

101 ‘Teoloog’ [Theologist], in “Gedigte & Verhale & Sketse uit die Pen van RHB” (translated).

102 ‘Rebel’ [Rebel], in “Gedigte & Verhale & Sketse uit die Pen van RHB” (translated).

He struggled with South Africa, with the terrible events of Soweto and Cape Town 1976, strained to be a true Christian in the context of human slaughter. Referring to Manenberg, a Cape Flats hotspot where children died during the 1976 upheaval, as “an emergency”, he wrote:

*In the Book You commanded
to turn the other cheek
What to do, Lord?...
the other cheek is shot away*¹⁰³

RECOMPOSING HIMSELF

The next year, in early February 1977, Russel resurfaced at UWC. The University seemed to have swallowed his one-line impertinence and re-admitted him. He signed up for a basketful of theology subjects and also Psychology III, one of his majors. He applied to be exempted from attending Psychology III lectures. This the Senate approved, advising “it is recommended that you improve your mark for the year”.¹⁰⁴

Again Russel plunged into his studies, reading and studying into the navy blue of the night. He read extensively, and his lectures in advance, including his father’s lecture notes of a decade or so before, so he would be prepared for what was coming.

One story has it that on occasion the professor told the students that they had to listen carefully because he had just added new material. The professor droned and the students scribbled furiously. After a while the professor said, “Mister Botman, I see you are not making notes? I’ve said that I have recently updated the notes.” To this Russel replied, “But professor, you also ‘recently’ updated the same notes a few years ago.”¹⁰⁵

103 “n Kollecteeroproep’ [A Collect Call], in “Gedigte & Verhale & Sketse uit die Pen van RHB” (translated). Botman here phones God “collect”, meaning he was poor (like the people of Manenberg) and could not pay for the call, therefore God had to accept the charge and respond.

104 CJ Saulse, Secretary, Faculty of Arts and Culture, to HR Botman, 14 April 1977 (translated). HR Botman Student File.

105 Anecdote related in Beryl Botman interview (translated). The story rings true to me. We as young UWC students always tried to act clever, and trying “to catch out” a lecturer was not beyond us.

Having studied at UWC myself, I imagine that the students cracked themselves laughing. Whether Russel intended to embarrass the professor or had simply drily remarked is not known. This could not have endeared him to the professor, and word could have gone around about this student not knowing his place. But Russel remained true to himself. He questioned the lecturers and made pertinent points.¹⁰⁶

In the same year, Russel broadened his intellectual horizon beyond South African and American ideologies. He discovered Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German theologian and martyr. Bonhoeffer spoke truth to power, and Adolf Hitler's Nazi regime hanged him when he would not change his thinking. Bonhoeffer became a role model to Russel, the first one beyond Jesus and his parents. Remember, Russel was not easily swayed into becoming a follower, not even of Allan Boesak. In Bonhoeffer, however, he found an ordinary mortal whose ideas and praxis he could follow.

This year, too, Russel virtually disappeared from public life. We can therefore assume that he devoted himself to his studies. Books and music occupied him in his room. One student who occasionally visited him, found him listening to The Four Tops and the Ink Spots.¹⁰⁷

At the end of 1977, his academic report showed that he had obtained exemption from writing examination in the following subjects: Official Subjects I; Dogmatology I; Ecclesiology I; New Testament I, Old Testament I; Missionary Science and Religious Studies. But it seemed Russel did not have enough time for all his subjects. Psychology III seemed to have been placed on a back burner, as he did not write this examination.

BACK ON TRACK (1978)

Russel re-enrolled in February 1978. Our student again plunged into his books. He and his student peers and lecturers interrogated the work of Karl Barth, for instance, especially the theologian's "doctrine of reconciliation".

106 Nico Botha interview; Andrew Phillips interview.

107 G Allen Grootboom interview (translated).

That year Professor Jaap Durand challenged them to critique apartheid from a theological point of view. He told his students that they could give him all the secular and enlightenment reasons why apartheid was wrong, but could they prove to him why it was wrong from a biblical point of view. He challenged them to embark on an on-going project to find the biblical reasons why apartheid was wrong.

Through their readings, lectures and seminars they tested reconciliation against separation (apartheid). Indeed, after being challenged by Professor Durand, Russel and his peers, James Buys, Nico Botha, Andrew Phillips and others, brainstormed (on the basis of a close textual exegesis of the Bible¹⁰⁸) about apartheid and the church. They came up with a strong position, to wit, “Apartheid being a system of oppression and injustice, is sinful and antithetical to the gospel because it is based on the fundamental irreconcilability of human beings, thus rendering ineffective the reconciling and uniting power of our Lord Jesus Christ.”¹⁰⁹

A newspaper later quoted him as having said: “One day in the spring of 1978 we arrived at a conclusion: Apartheid has as its point of departure the irreconcilability of people of different race groups. It was thus against the heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which takes its point of departure in the doctrine of reconciliation.”¹¹⁰ This realisation in effect constituted the advent of revolutionary change in the Dutch Reformed Protestant tradition in South Africa. Since then, Botman and his fellow *tokkelokke* followed the staid Durand and the charismatic Boesak to incline the Theology School and the Church toward the pressing issue of fighting apartheid.

108 Andrew Phillips interview; Nico Botha interview.

109 Henriksson L, “‘Many Good Words – Little Action’. The World Alliance of Reformed Church and the ‘South African Question’, 1960–1990’, in MA Plaatjies-Van Huffel & R Vosloo (eds), *Reformed Churches*, 368.

110 Tham M, ‘Russel Botman: Visionary Leader and Fighter on Sacred Ground’, *Daily Maverick*, 1 July 2014, <http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2014-07-01-russel-botman-visionary-leader-and-fighter-on-sacred-ground/#.VV72C0Y4cXE>

The year 1978 proved a good one for Russel. Intellectually and academically he seemed to have found his feet. At last his results came. He had passed, including Psychology III.¹¹¹ The BA degree at last.

THE YEAR 1979

Then 1979 dawned, full of promise. Russel proceeded to Cape Town having received a tidy loan from the Women's Missionary Association Synodic Committee of the Free State. In February, the University conferred the degree BA on Hayman Russel Botman.

On the academic front, he enrolled for the BTh degree. In the course of reading for this degree especially, Russel consulted Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920), the Dutch politician and neo-Calvinist theologian. He would have been moved by the theologian's provocative thesis that government came about because of sin, and that government, placing itself before God, was in great need of reform and redemption. I imagine Russel reading the lectures of Kuyper, who asserted that "when therefore humanity falls apart through sin, in a multiplicity of separate peoples; when sin, in the bosom of these nations, separates men and tears them apart, and when sin reveals itself in all manner of shame and unrighteousness – the glory of God demands that these horrors be bridled, that order return to this chaos, and that a compulsory force, from without, assert itself to make human society a possibility."¹¹² Maybe herein Russel saw part of the solution: the South African problem could be tackled by the church as "a compulsory force" and as demanded by God.

Kuyper put it that "the Calvinistic confession of the Sovereignty of God holds good for *all* the world". Therefore, irrespective of what authority people and the state arrogated themselves, "man never possesses power over his fellow-man in any other way than by an authority which descends upon him from the majesty of God".¹¹³ Kuyper lamented that the state did away with the "transcendent right of God". The management of public affairs

111 HR Botman, Examination Results 1978, HR Botman Student File.

112 Kuyper A, *Calvinism: Six Stone Foundation Lectures*, Michigan: William B Eerdmans, 1943, 81–82.

113 Kuyper, *Calvinism*, 85.

“is no longer the will of God, of Him Who created us and knows us, but it becomes the ever-changing will of the State, which, having no one above itself, actually becomes *God*, and has to decide how our life and existence shall be.”¹¹⁴ This should be challenged using a “social justice” imperative. But first had to come the “Calvinistic confession” that God (Jesus) was king.

In 1979, Allan Boesak’s *Die Vinger van God* [The Finger of God], a set of bare-knuckle sermons, appeared. In it he rails against apartheid, the system that by dint of statute and violence separated people and made reconciliation impossible. To Boesak the violence of apartheid was tantamount to a sin. In this text he implicitly calls for civil disobedience; only God’s law stood sacrosanct and trust must be put only in God. All the theology students read this slim volume cover to cover.

On the personal front, Russel still dated Lizzie Abrahams and by all reports his love for her had deepened. He now taught high school and studied full-time. So he juggled studies, teaching responsibilities, and his relationship with Lizzie. “That was Russel. Everything was important to him. Somehow he could keep things in balance.”¹¹⁵ At this time, he and Lizzie tied the knot in a civil ceremony in Somerset West. Russel’s family proved supportive – once they got the news. His sister Ethne echoed this support, writing to her pregnant sister-in-law, “Look after yourself, dear sister. We dedicate you and Russel to the Lord. Just believe and everything will go well.”¹¹⁶ With support like this, Lizzie and Russel relaxed and dreamed of starting a family.

In mid-December 1979, his examination results arrived. He had passed his courses!¹¹⁷ The outcome qualified him to be capped BTh at the next graduation ceremony.

114 Kuyper, *Calvinism*, 89.

115 Beryl Botman interview (translated).

116 Ethne Botman to Russel and “dear sister” [Lizzie], 17 September 1979 (translated), Russel Botman Private Papers.

117 HR Botman, Examination Results, 14 December 1979, Russel Botman Private Papers. The results showed that he obtained one A, two Cs, and three Bs.

THE INTERIM YEARS (1980–1981)

At the beginning of 1980, the Arts Faculty wrote to him with regard to his “Application for acceptance to MA (Bible Science)”, saying, “It is with pleasure that we inform you that the Senate has approved your application for acceptance to the above.”¹¹⁸ The young man forthwith enrolled for MA studies.

Russel continued teaching full-time and also did church work. And he studied for the BTh Licentiate! This qualification was conferred on him in 1981.

In May that year, Russel received news that the Senate had approved his dissertation topic, “The place of the New Testament Christology in the cadre of the new covenant”.¹¹⁹ His supervisor would be Dr JC Malan, for the degree MTh. Russel did not visit the campus much in 1980. Educational and pastoral work kept him busy in 1981 too. As a salary earner, he bought books left and right. He read furiously, especially Protestant literature by European theologians.

In the end, as of 1982, however, the University appointed Professor Dirkie Smit as supervisor of his MTh dissertation work. After deliberation with Smit, Russel settled on the topic: ‘Jesus, neither God, nor human? A critical study of the covenant-like Christology of Hendrikus Berkhof’.¹²⁰

END OF A DECADE OF STUDY

A decade of academic grind, political (activist) sparring, and emotional roller coasting had come to an end. I believe a calm and happy Russel could now embrace his research with confidence. Under the guidance of Dirkie Smit, Russel devoted himself to his MA studies. His undergraduate education had been long, but had at last come to the crucible. He essentially knew what he was doing – working on the covenantal theology of Berkhof – and where he was going.

118 CJ Saulse to HR Botman, 24 January 1980 (translated), HR Botman Student File.

119 CJ Saulse to HR Botman, 19 May 1980 (translated), HR Botman Student File.

120 Translated from Afrikaans. Dutch theologian Hendrikus Berkhof was professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Leiden.

In April 1982, the Association of Christian Students (ACS)¹²¹ magazine *Sight* published an article on Nehemiah by Russel.¹²² Botman had been a senior member and leader of this student body on campus and nationally up to 1979. The article seemed to be the content of the crucible – the sum total of his understanding of what he had learned and what he saw as his mission.

In this text exegesis Botman puts it that Nehemiah, the king's wine steward, suffered great emotional pain. "Nehemiah's suffering," he writes, "starts when he hears his people are in great distress and indignity."

The king acknowledged Nehemiah's "reality experience", and Nehemiah saw only one solution and that was to (re)build his people's city and to uplift them. He ignored criticism from left and right and acknowledged instead God's hand in helping him "in the world of oppression". So he continued the work of building his people's city. "What he does is profoundly born out of fear for the name of God."

In resuscitating the city, Nehemiah was thus motivated by the plight of his people and the trust he had put in God, whose hand, he knew, stretched over the project. His people now too contributed to the new city. They too put their hands to the service of the oppressed community. They had found an ally, and neither ideology nor egoism drove them. They trusted in God and shed themselves of spiritual bondage.

Botman argues that for a people to rise up in this manner meant sensitivity to the crisis engulfing them and acceptance that the hand of God protected and strengthened them.

The young scholar argues that if, like Nehemiah, one embarked on a building plan (to rebuild your city and reconstruct community), detractors from left and right will assail and threaten. But this should not cow one into letting the plan go, to be bullied into submission by the (oppressive) status quo. Subtextually, he seems to say that Christians should not fear the power

121 UWC having been a predominantly Afrikaans campus, the ACS was better known as the VCS (Vereniging van Christen Studente). This student organisation reached countrywide to Afrikaans-medium campuses.

122 Botman R, 'Hands of People in the Hand of God – Rise from spiritual bondage: Nehemiah 2: 17 & 18', *Sight*, April 1982 (translated).

of the state; they should fear God only. This fits in well with teachings of Durand and Boesak that only Jesus was King and that the experiential circumstances of community should spur one to uplift the downtrodden. In this article Russel implicitly invokes the VCS motto “Maak Jesus Koning” – even if this meant civil disobedience. He ends the article saying, “And then we will hopefully discover that we become involved in the great clearing up of God in such a way that my hands will subserviently rest in His hand.”¹²³ Was this the gold from the crucible of Russel’s undergraduate studies?

I suggest that the *Sight* article wraps up, albeit tentatively, the residual outcomes of Russel Botman’s studies and thinking during his undergraduate and early graduate years. And it portends the way forward. It suggests that his activism would now be imbedded in his scholarship and public ministry. I confidently suspect, then, that he had at this time graduated to the next point of power: that of organic intellectual inquiry as a weapon of struggle.

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2. WHO LIGHTS THE CANDLES? HIS ROLE AS MINISTER AND CHURCH LEADER

*Johan G Botha*¹

TALENTED AND CAPTIVATING

“A person is more than the sum total of your deeds,” I recall a comment by Russel Botman during one of our many conversations in the 1980s. It is a well-known and profound way of summarising the Protestant’s conviction regarding the justification by faith alone, but of him as person it was also inevitably true – he was also more than the sum of his deeds. This overview of what he did on ecclesiastical terrain is therefore incomplete and limited, but the heart of it is a rich and hopeful story with a particular impact on the church, academy and broader community.

The more than three decades that he served inside and from the church were difficult and sometimes stormy times of historic change. In the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC) where he was a minister and became a leader, growing and profound differences arose regarding how the battle against apartheid should be fought, how to think and how to act.

His versatile giftedness and servitude were recognised and appreciated in the church and within a short while he achieved success. Inside and outside of the church spheres he communicated in a quick-witted and talented way. His earnest and benevolent approach instilled trust in his colleagues and co-workers, and his hope for the future created courage and resolve.

In his interaction with people, also with those whose convictions differed from his own, he could convey decisive perspectives in a surprisingly clear

1 Former Minister in Synodical Service: Commission for Witnessing. Dr Botha unfortunately passed away before this book appeared in print.

and convincing way in uncomfortable situations, amidst uncertain times and change.

His friends, colleagues and co-workers found him to be very supportive and loyal. And if he did happen to err, he was always willing to admit his lack of insight afterwards.²

The story of his role in the church is told in five categories. There will be looked at the far-reaching influence that the Belhar Confession would have on his thoughts, life and ministry and how he was involved in public testimony in the years of fighting and conflict in church and society as congregation minister in Wynberg. Thereafter, his particular contribution over several decades in different church commissions will be outlined, followed by a discussion of his churchly leadership in his own denomination and the much broader ecumenical, worldwide church. Lastly, attention will be briefly paid to his preaching of the gospel of hope.

AN EAGER FOLLOWER OF THE BELHAR CONFESSION

The public struggle against apartheid escalated from 1976 onwards, with growing division and conflict in society and the church. In 1981, there were, for example, serious differences in the Dutch Reformed Missions Church (DRMC) about whether the church's origin should be celebrated with festivities or not.³ An alternative to the official festival service was organised in Wynberg's Dutch Reformed Missions Church.⁴

2 See HRB's (Hayman Russel Botman) tribute at the 2008 funeral of WD Jonker. He confessed that his and others' resistance against Jonker's meaningful confession on behalf of the DRC during the 1990 Rustenburg conference was misplaced. See the story of the conference in L Alberts & F Chikane (eds). 1991. *The road to Rustenburg: The church looking forward to a new South Africa*. Cape Town: Struik Publishers.

3 A lot of people wanted to say thank you for the Lord's grace in the church's life and work of a 100 years in a festive way. Others were seriously convinced that the inception of the DRMC (Dutch Reformed Missions Church) should never have happened and that it was the sad, sinful result of human prejudice. The controversial 1857 decision of the DRC to allow separation between people of different races, ethnic groups and status at the communion table on the basis of "the weakness (prejudice) of some" was given as the basis for the later inception of separate race-based DRC family churches. Of this, the DRMC in 1881 was the first.

4 See *Die Ligdraer*. DRMC newsletter, 1981. Reports, articles and letters.

In that year, Botman completes his theological training at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). On 27 September he delivers his trial sermon⁵ in the Dutch Reformed Missions Church Bishop Lavis, where he had been involved as student. He focused on Phil 2:5: “In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.” The responsible, practical following of Christ as Lord and the building of his kingdom would be the central basis of Botman’s own churchly and public testimony.

On 28 November of the same year, the Dutch Reformed Missions Congregation Wynberg calls him as co-minister.⁶ On 12 December, he accedes to this call, declining the call to the Dutch Reformed Missions Congregation Friemersheim in the southern Cape and later also one to the Dutch Reformed Missions Congregation Ebenhaeser in die Western Cape,⁷ and resigns from his temporary teaching position.⁸ At the start of 1982, he is installed as minister in Wynberg⁹ where he would serve until the end of 1993.

In 1982, he represents the Wynberg congregation at the 23rd DRMC Synod in Belhar.¹⁰ Heightened tensions and deep political divide were evident in the treatment of burning matters. In his words “there was no place to hide. Everyone, children and adults, were subjected to the mercilessness of the ... fight”.¹¹ A critic of the inequalities between the DRMC and the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), he was convinced that the DRMC should

5 BNC 2.8. (BNC is the Beyers Naudé Centre where HRB’s private collection is housed). Invitation card 1981. Prof PJJ Els was HRB’s promoter.

6 BNC 2.9.1. ‘Beroepsbrief van die NGSK Wynberg’ 28/11/1981, and BNC 2.9.2 ‘HRB se aanname’ 12/12/1981.

7 BNC 2.10 and 2.12. Beroepsbriewe NG Sendinggemeentes van Friemersheim 27/11/1981 and Ebenhaeser 15/12/1981.

8 BNC 2.11. ‘Bedankingsbrief uit onderwys’ 09/12/1981.

9 BNC. ‘Inligting HRB CV’.

10 22 September to 6 October 1982. See ‘Agenda’ and ‘Handelinge van die vergadering’.

11 HRB. 1998. ‘Gereformeerdeheid en die Belydenis van Belhar (1986)’, in WA Boesak & PJA Fourie (eds). *Vraagtekens oor Gereformeerdeheid?* Belhar: Lus publishers. 94–111, 102. At this stage he was already a lecturer in practical theology at UWC, involved in the KGA as Chair as well as widely in the church ecumenes.

withdraw from the DRC pension fund for ministers. The synod did not agree. His name went on the record as one of the minority.¹²

The birth of the Concept Belhar Confession¹³ influenced him in particular and thereafter fundamentally branded his life's work. He fully endorsed Belhar's focus on God *who calls us together from all nations, makes us visible, truly reconciles with God and with each other* and calls us up to *compassionate justice in obedient following of Christ Jesus, the Lord*. The Reformed interpretation and fulfilment of these confession foci, in obedient and responsible following of Jesus, was characteristic of his thoughts and actions.

He later¹⁴ explained that the Reformed identity embodies a certain lifestyle and that this is the Reformed's public declaration of faith, with at its core the logic of God and the implications of our lives.

With regard to Belhar, he said at the time: "[T]he translation of faith in God, with regard to how we, in our South African reality, follow God in His reconciliation deeds in the manner in which He creates unity and in the establishment of justice." The focus of our Reformed faith tradition to him was "that at every moment on every centimetre breadth of our lives we are confronted with the living God" and that "the majesty of God and the purposes that God has for creation, stand central". He knew this tradition

12 DRMC Synod 1982, Proceedings, p. 575.

13 At the 1982 DRMC Synod a report was served from the synod's delegates to the World Council of Reformed Churches (WCRC) in Ottawa in August 1982. At the core was the WCRC's statement of a *status confessionis* (status of confession) with regard to the "theological grounding" of the policy of apartheid. The three Afrikaans churches, including the Dutch Reformed Church's role in this grounding, was clearly indicated to the WCRC and in this light these churches' membership was suspended. Naturally it sent shock waves through the church community in RSA. A month later the DRMC's synod confirmed the ecumenical church's theological evaluation and the WCRC's specific decision in Ottawa with an own decision to reject the continued theological justification of apartheid as a serious fallacy ("heresy") and during a sitting of the synod in 1982 they announced a state of confession. As direct result of this *status confessionis* decision, the Belhar Confession (Belhar) was born during the course of the sitting of the synod and was also accepted by the meeting as concept. Hereafter, during the course of 4 years, it was judged by all the congregations of the DRMC and was accepted as a full-fledged confession, on the same level as the DRC family's three accepted ecumenical confessions and their three formularies of unity. For the DRC and others in the church family who increasingly lived in separate church worlds, the context and process of Belhar's birth and consequently also the confession itself was so controversial that it made the enthusiastic appropriation and acceptance of it extremely difficult for decades to come.

14 HRB. 1998. 'Gereformeerdeheid en die Belydenis van Belhar (1986)'. 94–111.

motivated Reformed Christians to bring their God-faith to directly relate to the normal life.

These convictions would clearly show how he himself thought and acted publicly in several situations and with regard to core aspects of the church's life and testimony.

Apartheid and its theological basis denied and invalidated the heart of the God-faith, namely the reconciliation between God and man and men among themselves. On all levels Botman dedicated his ministry to expose this transgression¹⁵ and to help overturn it. He realised that the credibility and integrity of our following of Christ would bring about "life obligations" and "cost" with the Belhar Confession. He was of the opinion that in the post-apartheid situation, it would mean *church unity* and the commitment to the rebuilding and *development of the poorest among the poor*, as emulation of the light of the Word, the source of truth.¹⁶

He did not allow the shifting bases of authority to rule over his convictions and practical ministries.¹⁷ Even if he were to create room for opposition, the Word of God and the confession were the true measures and authority for his attitude and action.

In 2003, he worked alongside Dutch colleagues on a project on "Gospel and culture".¹⁸ Against the background of South Africa's institutionalised racism, the role of the Dutch Reformed Church's exclusive understanding of culture identity in church and state and the resistance against it from

15 He would, however, make a stand to point out this serious transgression if he got the impression that the persons he was addressing or the church did not understand the core of the matter or fallacy. See, for example, his judgement of the DRC General Synod 1990's contextual view of apartheid, to his mind, true insight in the depth of their fallacy, namely the invalidation of the Biblical doctrine of reconciliation.

16 HRB. 1998. 'Gereformeerdeheid en die Belydenis van Belhar', p. 108.

17 See WD Jonker, 'Die Ned Geref Kerk se Gereformeerde identiteit en verskuiwende gesagsgasisse', at the DRCSA 1995 Synod, in Proceedings, p. H185.

18 BNS 21.1. HR Botman. 'Circles of Embrace or Lines of Exclusion?' In *Gospel and Culture series 2003*, MA Oduyoye & HM Vroom (eds). Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam. Volume with pp. 149–171.

the black Reformed angle,¹⁹ he focuses on “circles of embracing or lines of exclusion?” He remembers the surprising birth of Belhar and his own astonishment: “[I] am still speechless about the sudden grasp of the situation that happened at the meeting.” He emphasises that Belhar teaches us that ethical dedication in the core of our faith have important consequences for our own lives and work. “I agree that Belhar must be heard as a messenger of the action and not as the inductor of an orthodox. The confession’s final word is not about ‘the real faith’. The fundamental language of Belhar is the language of ‘obedience’ and of the ‘following of Jesus of Nasareth.’”

Many years after the birth of Belhar, he wrote to an American colleague in the Presbyterian Church of the USA who wanted to know whether he had helped to compile Belhar: “[I] confirm that I am not the author or co-author of the Belhar Confession. I have always ... seen myself as one of the confession’s enthusiastic followers ... as with all confessions, the Holy Spirit had to be the main author, taking into account the great divide existed between the commission members at the time into consideration.”²⁰

A year or so later, he emphasises the “following of Christ” in Belhar at the synod of the DRC in the Western and southern Cape.²¹ “Start reading Belhar from the back, like a Hebrew scripture. The key to the understanding of this Confession lies in the fact that we obediently follow our Jesus, our only Lord.” For a lot of synod attendees, Botman’s perspective on the reading of Belhar was surprising and fresh. It helped members of the meeting to receive the confession as a gift and appropriate it to themselves. In this light and after the acceptance of Belhar as faith base, this confession has been put into verse and set to music in a new song by the liturgical team. Since then Belhar is sung as own faith language in the DRC with the salient

19 He shows for example on the role that for example ABRECSA (The Alliance of Black Reformed Christians in Southern Africa) played to emphasise the Gospel’s true claims with regard to identity and culture and to bring the true focus from the Reformed tradition to the fore.

20 BNS Addendum 1, E-mail to dr Neal Presa of the PCUSA on 22/11/2010 (excerpt). Also refer to his contemplation on the matter in HRB, 1998. ‘Gereformeerdeheid en die Belydenis van Belhar, oor die Versoeningsbelydenis’, p. 98 ff.

21 NGKSA-sinode 2011. Refer to article by Neels Jackson in *Die Burger*, 12/05/2011, ‘Eenheid moet nou volg’.

focus on Jesus' Lordship.²² Ten years back, the leadership of a church in Germany thanked him that he came to share this "last sentence" perspective with them.²³

Botman also used other ways to support the realisation of the Reformed ideology with reference to Belhar. In 2010, as rector of Stellenbosch University, he subsidised the republication of a publication on the Confession aimed at the acceptance of it by congregants and other people. In a moving foreword,²⁴ focusing on the next generation, ripened by the resistance and strandedness of the previous two, three decades, he talks truthfully, directly, from the heart.

"Belhar is ahead of its time. It will be faith-glue for the upcoming new generations", he writes. He was convinced that, from all sides, his own generation, by name the United Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) and the DRC, "is caught up in conflicts gone by ... have deeply faltered ... have already set aside or watered down the mutual meaning gift of reconciliation in and with Jesus Christ ... and along with it caused justice and (church) unity to end up on the doorstep of the church and political life". "The sunglasses of our oppositional thought and obstinate aggression twist and darken the Light in which Belhar stands." A previous generation in the DRC might have positioned themselves against the gospel of reconciliation, he said, but "today our own generation also do not really embody the gospel".

He remembers that Belhar was like ointment in the discord in the DRMC, smoothing conflict between the philosophers of reconciliation, the activist who were justice seekers and the advocates for church unity. He continues to say that "our hardened resistance was heeled" and that conflicting barriers of thought in the DRMC were broken down. It is thanks to Belhar that we

22 'Ons glo ... in U alleen'. Text: Nico Simpson; Music: Riaan Steyn, Jandré Viljoen, Neil Büchner © 2011 Flam Musiek-Uitgewers [Created during the DRC Synod Western and Southern Cape, May 2011].

23 BNS 36.19. See letter by H Klassohn, 11/05/2000, Ev Kirche der Union. Appreciation for the synod presentation by HRB on Barmen and Belhar, with focus on the "last sentence" in Belhar.

24 J Botha & P Naudé. 2010. *Goeie nuus om te bely. Die Belydenis van Belhar en die pad van aanvaarding*. 'Voorwoord', pp. 8–10. Wellington: Bybelmedia. Also published in English by Bybelmedia in 2011.

“know that reconciliation, justice and unity represent the faith triangle of the gospel”. And “the heart of the gospel beats where these three gifts of God’s free favour and God’s commands embrace each other in the reality of our time”. He regretted the fact that his generation does not know how to exercise simple obedience, struggle through the conflicts of the past and share in the disobedience of a whole generation.

While his generation could not do it, he was convinced that the next generation would reap the fruits of the Belhar faith with confidence of faith.

He emphasised that the positive stories that were known about Belhar and its confession, from different denominations, local congregations, rings and ministries, confirm the Spirit of the Lord’s work among us. Our calling and responsibility today is to, together as church, give birth to the new reality of lived unity, true reconciliation and compassionate justice that Belhar spoke about and which the society and creation around us anxiously await (Romans 8).

Others, so he concluded, might one day remember that the Belhar Confession “was too early for my generation”, but was eventually “lived out with joy” by “the next generation” of believers, not as a “stick for the opposing party” but as “the staff of the Shepherd” to go with.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY FROM THE CONGREGATION

Botman’s own convictions and testimony grew from a framework of obedient following. To him, taking public responsibility was the obvious thing to do as congregate and student at UWC²⁵ and as minister of the DRMC Wynberg and he became involved in the storm and stress in the church and society of the 1980s.

To deal with the challenges of the fight, he continued to look for deeper anchoring and discrimination skills. He was dedicated to the general ministering work and the pastorate to congregants,²⁶ got ecumenically

25 BNS HRB CV, 1976, Public relations officer of the SRC at UWC; 1977, Editor of *Koinonia*, Theol Fact publication, UWC; 1979, Chairperson, National Leaders Forum of the Association of Christian Students in SA.

26 BNS information.

involved and grew in the role as church leader. But he also intentionally undertook fundamental theological study to sharpen his knowledge and insights for the challenges of the ministry. With the candle burning on both ends, he persevered with his postgraduate studies to improve his ability to determine what really matters.

In service of the local congregation, convinced that the church in South Africa is fundamentally straying from the Biblical doctrine of reconciliation,²⁷ he focused in depth on the *Christologie* of the Dutchman, Hendrikus Berkof, for his master's degree (graduated cum laude) at the UWC in 1984.

In the early 1990s, while church and society struggled to overcome the challenges of apartheid with the necessary transition to a new dispensation, he was sure this transformation meant a new *kairos*. He knew the apartheid dispensation and had collaborated actively in several contexts towards its conversion. For this process he searched for a theological view of people that would be a match for the necessary transitions and undertook his doctoral study against this background.

The relationship between the redemption (salvation) by Christ and history was a central theological question for him. How should the congregation in Wynberg, the church as public body of Christ, and we as members follow Him in South Africa today? What should our following look like and how should it work? He critically looked at the German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer's concept of discipleship (following) and equated his focus on responsible action (ethics) to transformation in our context.

He completes his dissertation at the end of 1993²⁸ with suggestions for a theology of transformation, and dedicates it to "a community who are now looking for a vision for its own future and more specifically looking at what the Gospel means for it today".

27 See NGSK 1978 'Sinode Handeling': decision on the ground fallacy of Apartheid, namely that it is based on the "irreconcilableness of people". In 1978 reflected along with the dogmatic class of Prof Jaap Durand at UWC about the proposal that was finally accepted by the synod.

28 HRB, 1993. Discipleship as transformation? Towards a Theology of transformation. University of the Western Cape. Unpublished doctoral thesis.

In extremely turbid times, both studies²⁹ aided his development as theologian and church leader to think differentially and testify daringly.

Deep reflection became inherent to his thought and ministry choices. At decisive moments, he was conclusively anchored and led to enhanced knowledge and skill. It is therefore not surprising that he became known as a visionary thought leader who could look beyond the immediate, could make surprising life choices on fundamental, not necessarily popular, grounds and could remain a loyal yoke companion for co-workers and a open discussion partner for opponents.

Foreign opportunities and bursaries were available, but he preferred to do his postgraduate studies in South Africa. He reckoned it was the responsible way for him to remain involved in the congregation and the broader church and community forums and to cooperate with others to oppose the old dispensation and help to shape the new and to do thorough theological reflection within the context.

In the society, non-violent and violent actions against apartheid caused pressure, uncertainty and deep division among people. Leaders were looking for ways to act responsibly in the situation. Against the unfair legislation and wrong practices of the apartheid government and some who opposed it, they proclaimed the hope of the gospel.

Botman's contributions were sharp and fundamentally focused on the grounding of matters and processes. His involvement with the public resistance against the government system, however, meant suffering.

In 1985, the government announced a first state of emergency. The United Democratic Front (UDF) played a leading role in the society's resistance against the apartheid government. The Wynberg DRMC decided to affiliate with the UDF and asked parents to support a consumer boycott. They identified with the call to the lifting of the state of emergency and Nelson Mandela's release. It was also announced in the Wynberg congregation. Leading figures in the UDF, among others the then assessor³⁰ of the DRMC,

29 In the dogmatic, under the guidance of Prof DJ Smit.

30 Dr AA Boesak.

were accused of the infringement of the state of emergency's security regulations. During the hearing in the Wynberg magistrate's court during August, the church council made the church building available for a public prayer meeting.

The involvement of leaders of the congregation in the politics of the day led to resistance among a group of congregants. Their protest was against this action of the church council and that of Botman at a UDF meeting. For them it meant "increasing politicisation of the congregation". They also requested that the "Gospel should be proclaimed in the church without political insinuations".³¹

The situation in church and state became even more turbid. The public protest surged up even more. The apartheid government applied strict security measures. In futile efforts to smother the protest, public leaders were harassed, arrested and constricted. In 1985, Botman himself was arrested with other leaders and held at the Victor Verster prison without trial.³²

This experience traumatised his wife and two young children.³³ From cryptic notes that she made between 1985 and 1986, it became clear that the state of emergency's implications and people's fear to take part in the resistance were discussed in the circles where his wife provided leadership.³⁴

The government's restricting action put him and his family, as with others, under extraordinary pressure. He, however, continued to sharpen his theological resistance against apartheid and along with other leaders and congregants, empowered congregations and the broader church to determine for themselves what is happening in the world around them and to testify responsibly and openly.³⁵

31 BNS 6.12.4. Memo of burdened congregants.

32 As student leader at UWC in the aftermath of Soweto 1976, he helped to lead co-students' resistance against apartheid and was then also incarcerated without trial and questioned.

33 BNS 43.10. "Son of his Father". Russel Botman – a documentary DVD, SABC 2, 2007. Memories by the family.

34 BNS 6.11. Personal notes, Mrs L Botman 1985–1986. Musings about people's fear in the state of emergency on 10/09/1985.

35 With the farewell of his co-minister in September 1985, the vacancy was not filled. See BNS 7.4. Botman was now the only minister. The health of his wife Lizzie deteriorated during this time and she died in 1987. In 1989, Botman later married Ms Beryl van der Scholtz.

Wynberg congregants published the newsletter “Kontak”.³⁶ The February 1989 edition, in the context of Passiontide, included Botman’s pastoral planning for mourning pastorate, baptism catechesis, pastoral house visits and equipment for the church council. The fate of the political prisoners and their countrywide hunger strike were explained. The moderator of the DRMC’s³⁷ open letter to the Minister of Law and Order³⁸ was also published in the Newsletter. In his letter he identified himself with the hunger strike of political prisoners by taking part in it himself. With this his focus was placed on the government’s arbitrary practice of “arrest without trial” through which people were denied their right to be accused or freed. Congregants were reminded by the church council of the national day of prayer for detainees and the ring’s plan to commemorate it on 12 March 1989.

ACTIVE IN CHURCH COMMISSIONS

The DRMC recognised Botman’s talent in synod regard. In 1982, he becomes member and secretary of the Commission for Learning and Study, which submits 13 study pieces to the synod in 1986.³⁹ For the duration of the latter he is the convener of the important Temporary Commission for Current Affairs, to help formulate the church’s viewpoints on for example “detainment without trial”, “group areas”, “the freedom theology”, “the tot system”, “church and violence”, “politics from the pulpit”, “the kairós document”, the “Freedom manifest”, “the Freedom movement”, “Civil disobedience”, “the church and political groupings” and “freedom of religion”.⁴⁰

The 1986 synod accepted Belhar as full confession of the DRMC as well as the “Work definition for mission” as mission basis for the DRMC.⁴¹ The core

36 BNS 7.4. *Contact*. Newsletter, DRMC Church Wynberg, February 1989.

37 Dr Allan Boesak.

38 Mr Adriaan Vlok.

39 DRMC Synod Agenda, 1982, pp. 140–208.

40 DRMC Synod, 1986, pp. 748; 820; 837; 855.

41 Compiled by representatives of the DRC family; see PJ Robinson & JG Botha, 1986. *Wat is Sending?* Belhar: NGSK SKGA.

of the work definition was an unequivocal “yes” for the visible embodiment of church unity and for the demolishing of apartheid.

The synod also appointed Botman as member of the DRMC Synodical Commission for Witness. In a particularly fruitful relationship that would last from 1986 to 2014, and to which he himself attached special value, Botman and the commission were prepared to address often complicated ministry challenges in church and society.

One of these challenges was the creation of a united ministry for Witness for the DRC family on synodical level as a precursor in the visible embodiment of visible unity that Belhar confesses.

With these theological insights as background and missionary pluck he helped to guide the practical unification and transformation of the DRC family in the Cape’s synodical witness ministries. He also purposefully led a similar process on national level and was chairperson at the founder’s meeting of the DRC family’s unified witnessing. With it he helped to shape a credible, transformative public testimony which truly focuses on the conversion of the church family’s own heart.⁴²

This process started on a practical level at the end of 1987, when the Synodical Commission for Mission of the DRC in the Western Cape asked the Commission for Witness of the DRMC to henceforth undertake the “mission of the church” together. “We can no longer do it on our own. Please stand with us in this,” was their plea.⁴³

The Mission Church’s Commission for Witness understood the turnaround in missional thinking and reacted positively to it. A policy base and management framework were approved and the Cape family’s united Commission for Witness was founded in November 1991 with Botman as co-chairman.⁴⁴

42 The Commission for Witness’ letterhead since 1991 specifically refers to John 17:21, “one ... so that the world may believe”.

43 Letter SSK to SKGA, Dec 1987.

44 CW (united Commission for Witness of the DRC Church Family; DRCSA, RCA and the previous DRMC and DRCA) Founding meeting, Minutes, Nov 1991. Also see JG Botha, 2004. ‘Sending in

In 1988, he was chosen as chairperson of the DRMC's synodical Commission of Witness and was co-responsible for the compilation of the united ministry's policy base.⁴⁵

This policy emphasises that the church participates in the inclusive mission of the triune God who gives forgiveness, deliverance from all forms of need and care to all people and the creation. The credibility of the church as messenger and minister of this good news is inextricably connected to the unity of the church (John 17:21).⁴⁶

This foundation directed Botman and the united Commission for Witness to also consciously allow for God's *mission at the heart of the church* in thought and action. The founding of this united ministry, we realised, was not just some or other new agreement or action, but was fundamentally part of the conversion of our own divided and dividing churchness, the turnaround of our own lost hearts, the visible transformation of our own apartheid identity.

1988 was also the DRC family's official mission year with the national conference in Pretoria. The DRMC Commission for Witness, initially involved but not recognised throughout in the compilation of the programme, did not just want to be co-opted in other's agenda. Strong arguments were made that the DRMC's Commission for Witness had to withdraw from the process, but it was asked: "Who blows out the candles?" The leadership of the Commission for Witness, however, saw that the fundamental question was and time and again would be: Who bridges the gap? "*Who lights the candles?*" The focal point was taken up with the organising committee and they finalised the programme together.

die hart van die kerk'. A concise history of the Commission for Witness in the Western Cape (CW) (1980s to 2011). Information piece of the Commission for Witness.

45 Along with Prof CM Pauw of the DRCSA's Mission Commission (MC), with important perspectives from Belhar, the 1986 Working definition for mission and synod decisions of the DRC Family. See JG Botha, 2004, 'Sending in die hart van die kerk'.

46 DRMC Synod 1990, 'Skema van werksaamhede', pp. 465–467. Also see DRMC Synod 2015, Agenda p. A117. Addendum (1988): 'Riglyne vir die gesamentlike kommissie van die Sinodale Kommissie vir Getuigenisaksie (SKGA) van die NGSK en die Sinodale Sendingkommissie (SSK) van die NG Kerk, Sinode Wes-Kaap en ander medewerkers'. (In 1989, the DRCA and RCA took part in the unification process. This basis was accepted by the DRMC CW and SSK).

In a moving address, Botman, in light of the message of reconciliation of the gospel, sketched his own and other's story of struggle against apartheid in church and government as well as his own experience of detainment without trial. His very captivating approach, without bitterness and with a positive preview of a repaired church and society, made a strong impression on conference attendees and instilled hope.

As chairperson of the Commission for Witness he presented the united ministry's reports after 1991 at a number of successive synods in the DRC family.⁴⁷ The DRC family's witness ministries in and outside of the Cape was also reported wider and the founding synod of the URCSA decided in 1994 to walk a similar uniting road with the witness work of the whole family on national level.⁴⁸

The united General Commission for Witness of the DRC family (GCW) was eventually constituted on 26 September 2001⁴⁹, with Botman as the first chairperson. In this way, the 1986 unity vision of the Belhar Confession and the working definition for mission were given hands and feet nationally.⁵⁰

Because the Cape Commission for Witness was strongly convinced that church unification had to be practically visible, the cooperation of the service and witness ministries of the DRC family in the Eastern Cape was approved in 1998⁵¹ and in 2002 it was decided to operate the Commission for Witness from a unified office.⁵²

47 DRMC Synod 1994, 4 April ff. 'Skema van werksaamhede', pp. A13/1–A13/29 and 'Handelinge Laatstuk' D4, pp. 21–25, 'Behandeling van verslag' pp. 196–198; 'Eerste VGK Kaapland-sinode 4 Okt 1994' ff, 'Skema van werksaamhede', pp. B/1–B26 and 'Handelinge' pp. 150–159; DRCSA Synod 1995, 'Skema van werksaamhede' H29–H38, HRB co-CW chairperson, along with Rev N Lamprecht.

48 A proposal for this was accepted at the founding synod of the URCSA in April and accepted at the second synod of the URCSA. In 1997, the basis for the united national witness ministry was approved. HRB was advisory member of the Faculty of Theology at the UWC at the synod.

49 Approved by the URC General Synod 2001, see 'Handelinge van die vergadering'; also see the Unified General Synodical Commission for Witness of the DRC family founding meeting, Minutes, Sept 2001.

50 In 2006, the GCCW was followed up by the United Service Group for Service and Witness (USGSW) who today directs and coordinates the deacon and witness work of the DRC family.

51 See CUCC in URC Cape Synod 1998, 'Skema', p. 8/30 and 'Besluiteregister', p. 21, point 3.1.

52 URC Cape Synod 2002, 'Skema & Handelinge'.

Botman was outspokenly dedicated to the embodiment of one church and the building of an inclusive community that embraces diversity in which reconciliation and justice triumphs. He was convinced that the real challenge with this, as in the early Christian congregation in Antioch, was to manage diversity in one church and to shape and carry our vision for missions from there.

We must not lay unnecessary burdens on each other, but “must ourselves set the example of a reconciled community” of a “just and good diversity ... a reconciled community in which a variety of gifts, backgrounds, convictions, languages and cultures, which are opportunities for mutual service and enrichment, are visible”, as a basis for our growth and for the development of the world. Such a reconciled community of diversity in unity will bring about “the pain of conversion and the change of attitudes and thoughts and structure that have developed over many years” and will place us on a road of which we cannot foresee the end ... we will inevitably experience intense birthing pains while we all wrestle to overcome the estrangement between people, the bitterness, the irreconcilableness and fear.⁵³

Almost simultaneously in the early 1990s, the synodical unification process for witness, Botman and his colleague from the local DRC⁵⁴ and church council members started walking a similar path as the synodical commissions of the DRC family. Initial rifts of distrust and misunderstandings were overcome, relationships were built and together they walked along the practical road of the unification of the local congregation. This hopeful congregation initiative was taken further on a broader level.⁵⁵ The two Wynberg rings together focused on unity and the building of relationships and negotiated a basis for their reunification process. Others saw the process and supported it as a positive and imitable example.⁵⁶

53 BNS Addendum 1, HRB for the KGA JV 2006, *On transformation and the building of diversity in and through the CFW*, with thoughts from Acts 13 and 15, Ef 4 and the detailed quotes from the accompanying letter at the Belhar Confession, 1986.

54 Dr D Nel.

55 See the Wynberg ring conventicle.

56 See, for example, DRCSA Synod 1995, ‘Handelinge’ H52 points 6.1 and 6.2., as well as the development of the Wesland Unifying Ring.

When the Wynberg initiative came to a standstill after the death of Botman's successor⁵⁷ in 2008, he was very upset because these local initiatives at establishing unity, like those on synodical level, were recognition to him of the integrity of the church's confession in obedient following of Christ. While he was also involved with other levels of visible embodiment of the church's unity, he also wanted to see it happen locally and help make it a reality.⁵⁸ The running aground of the Wynberg unity initiative was a painful loss for him personally.

In his last formal appearance at the Cape Commission for Witness's 21st birthday in 2012, Botman emphasised four directive convictions.⁵⁹

- Members of the Reformed church confess with conviction – every thumb breadth of reality belongs to the Lord! It forms the basis of our involvement, callings and testimony in all facets of our society. Do not back away from the challenges involved in this.
- The Lord calls us to seriously embody unity, practically, like in the Commission for Witness, as a mirror for the whole church. As church we seriously owe it to the world, so they can believe Jesus is the Lord.
- We must provide hospitality to the strangers, as the gospel of love asks, especially when people use the differentness of others to push them away, out of the conversation.
- The Word of God must be our final guiding principle. We stand and fall by it. We take the context seriously, but the Word and Jesus motivate us to testify bravely.

SUBSERVIENT IN THE LEADERSHIP OF CHURCH AND ECUMENES

At the DRMC Synod of 1990, Botman was chosen as vice-chairperson and convenor of the Temporary Commission of Current Affairs with a long list of matters for judging and recommendation.⁶⁰

57 Rev James Buys.

58 See proposal, not accepted, of HRB regarding unity initiatives on local congregational level, DRMC Synod Proceedings 1990, p. 1095; He desired the visible, witnessable unity body of the church in Stellenbosch and shortly before his death he was very hesitant to become a member of one local congregation.

59 See Agenda URC Cape Synod 2014, p. 466; Agenda DRCSA Synod 2015, pp. 99, 100.

60 For example Communion to children, the DRMC's relationships, Faith and the Bible, the Kairos document, a democratic education system, military service, the partnership of men and

His election to the executive church council meant that he was closely involved with the unification negotiations with the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRCA). The two sister synods met in 1990 in the Cape Peninsula to constitute the Unifying Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA). The necessary canonical basis could, however, not be agreed upon. Therefore the synods met as conventicle, where Botman lay the decision to make structural unification take place as soon as possible before the meeting, as a first step in the full unification of the whole DRC family, inside and outside of South Africa.⁶¹ Thereafter, he was involved in the preparations and negotiations for the founding for the URCSA on 14 April 1994, but not as a delegate.

Since the beginning of that year he was a lecturer in practical theology at the University of the Western Cape. As theology lecturer and university administrator he continued his high regard and close relationship with the local congregation and the synodical church as well as with several ecumenical activities and institutions.⁶²

One of the most important ministry outreaches that the Commission for Witness of the DRC family have been involved in for more than 100 years, is the Labour Ministry.⁶³ As chairperson of the Commission for Witness, Botman helped to manage the transformation and repositioning of the ecumenical Labour Ministry, initially in the Western Cape during the 1980s and later on a national level as well.⁶⁴

women, the 1989 Unification Conference of the DRC family and civil disobedience. DRMC Synod Proceedings 1990.

61 See for preparatory pieces DRMC Synod 1990 'Skema van werksaamhede', A2, 'Moderatuursverslag', Addendum 5, 'Aanhangsels' 1–7, pp. 53–86; see 'Konvent by NGSK-sinode 1990 Handeling', pp. 1172–1175.

62 See, for example, the HR Botman CV; HR Botman collection by the BNS. For the purpose of this overview the amount of information is incalculable.

63 The DRC's involvement in this dates from 1897.

64 Industrial Ministry South Africa (IMSA) is an ecumenical NWO ministry that have been involved in the world of work since 1897, with roots in the DRC's railway pastorate and the ecumenical focus on the mining ministry. The ministry supports believers to work faithfully and also represented the ecumenical church's voice with regard to matters of justice and law in the industrial context and is a pastoral shoulder for employees and employers.

During a conference of the Western Cape Labour Ministry in Bellville, shortly after he became professor in Missionary Science at Stellenbosch University, he reflected with others on “*work as calling and worship*”.⁶⁵ While some were economically prosperous, he emphasised that workers in the Western Cape experienced hopelessness. In this regard, social transformation is our most important work in South Africa⁶⁶ and it cannot be isolated from our prayers. That is where the intersection of our hope lies, he emphasised the important perspective of his interlocutor.⁶⁷

He was convinced that our social composition plays a decisive role in the character of our work. Therefore, the basic transformation that the labour ministry underwent in the 1980s,⁶⁸ from an apartheid ministry to one that includes all, gave him hope because he was convinced “the mission of the church and therefore the gospel of Christ, within the ministry or in other regards, are injured by our discord”. For him, the social connectedness of work and prayer should also include an activism for justice and equality in the South African context.

At the memorial service held in the URCSA Institution, where he and his family were congregants for nearly 20 years, and during similar events on the Stellenbosch University campus, his distinctive leadership role within the ecumenical church was emphasised by colleagues.⁶⁹

65 In J Botha (ed), 2001. *Work as calling and worship: Challenging thoughts for our day*. Wellington: Lux Verbi, based on the 2000 conference of Industrial Ministry. Reprint 2015, pp. 45–48, Wellington: CLF.

66 HRB refers to Pres. Nelson Mandela’s words in 1997 at a convention of religious, private sector and political leaders: “in our striving for political and economic development the ANC recognises that social transformation cannot be separated from spiritual transformation”.

67 Prof Geoffrey Wainwright, highly acclaimed international ecumenical theologian.

68 The ministry among railway staff in the Western Cape initially was race based. During the 1980s, this situation was challenged theologically and transformed from the DRMC. Botman was closely involved; Article by HRB, 1996. In the ‘Arbeidsbediening Nuusbrief, Jrg 3, No 1’. Theme: “Faithful works” (he reformulated the question on labour and faith).

69 BNS Addendum 1, see the Memorial service on 03/07/2015. “Prophetic consistency of a contemporary Jeremiah”, Dr Lionel Louw’s sermon based on Jer 1:4–10. He reflects on Botman as a “remarkable colleague, friend and fearless prophet” in different time zones and capacities in ecumenical regard; Video of 05/07/2015 on the web with Dr Setri Noyomi’s message of comfort on 5 July 2014 about him as a leader with a vision for transformation, with emphasis on Rom 8: 31–39 and John 10:10, as well as homage by Dr Johann Rupert (chancellor of the SU), Bishop Ziphozihle Siwa (president of the SARK) and Dr Anlené Taljaard (lecturer at the UOFS).

He is remembered as somebody who emotionally and intellectually made the existential transition of apartheid South Africa to the constitutional democracy that we live in today. The legal framework has changed and also the challenge to be prophetically consistent in a new dispensation. To him it required a transition from resistance against apartheid to the building on an inclusive society of justice, peace and prosperity. As visionary, he took up the role of community builder and reconciler from within and outside the church and he worked hard to help heal the division sown by apartheid. With the youth and their tomorrows constantly in his sight, he planted challenging ideas and purposefully built an inclusive and just society. He wanted to leave behind a softer, more life-giving world for the next generation. In the process he was an advocate in thought and action for justice on all levels of race, sex, the creation, the climate and an economy that includes all of God's people.

In his pursuit for justice and peace he did not hesitate to speak the truth to the new managers of power. Along with others he purposefully focused on the building of a new society, inside and outside of South Africa. In this process higher education and church were his platforms to the end.

Along with other co-workers, he was seriously worried after 20 years of democracy in South Africa that not enough progress was made on the levels of injustice, unemployment and the creation of a healthy education system. He clearly made his voice heard and worked positively to help transform the life circumstances of disadvantaged people. He wanted the church to play a leading role in the transformation of society and encouraged the church leaders to exercise their responsibility with courage and to not disappoint God and the people.⁷⁰

His ecumenical involvement extends back to his student days. As leader in the Christian Student Association he concentrated on the uncovering of the basis and the dismantling of apartheid. In the difficult 1980s he was the chairperson of the Western Cape churches' ecumenical "Urban Planning Commission" and involved in the National Initiative for Reconciliation".⁷¹

70 BNS Addendum 1, See L Louw's sermon.

71 BNS HRB CV, DRMC Synod 1986, Agenda, 'Verslag SKGA'.

In 1989, he was invited to attend the first World Council of Churches (WCC) conference in South Africa in Cottesloe 1960. In 1990, he was a member of the DRMC executive church council at the Rustenburg council of churches and was directly involved in the proceedings of the Southern African Council of Reformed Churches (SACRC),⁷² the WCC. As chairperson of the SACRC, he helped organise several important conferences. Besides giving serious thought to the definitions and the applications of power,⁷³ he was focused on the embodiment of church unity⁷⁴ and the true co-partnership of men and women in the mission of God.⁷⁵

In the year that he became theology lecturer at the UWC, he was honoured for his dedication to ecumenical involvement in the church's fight for the poor and the people on the periphery and was also nominated as general secretary of the South African Council of Churches (SACC).⁷⁶ In 1995, he focused on aspects of reconciliation⁷⁷ and in 1996 he was a member of church delegations that deliberated with politicians⁷⁸ on crime and justice. On request of the Western Province Council of Churches, he compiled guidelines for local use in congregations that were published in 1997 as *Totdat vrede en geregtigheid ontmoet, 'n uitdaging aan kerke en Christene in*

72 BNS, HRB CV, chairperson of the SACRC between 1990–1998; Also BNS 8, 'Handelinge van die 2de Jaarlikse SABGK Konferensie', Windhoek, 26–28/04/1990.

73 For example BNS 9.2, SACRC conference in Lusaka, Zambia, 1992.

74 BNS 10.1 and 2, among others through his visits to and cooperation with ecumenical partners, for example 1993 in Kampen and according to BNS 40.1 his visits WARC staff and in 1995 at the Reformed Communion Synod in Hanau, Germany, and many times thereafter from overseas colleagues and coworkers.

75 In WCRC regard 1995, 1997.

76 BNS HRB CV, see also BNS 41.2, Letter F Chikane 07/09/1994. Botman declined the nomination.

77 BNS 12.2–6 and 37.9–11. At the 25th celebration of Kairos in the Netherlands HRB made contributions on 'Bevrijding en Verzoening', about the role of the church in the process of peace and reconciliation and at the same time on 'Mensenrechten en Verzoening in Zuid-Afrika', the role of the churches and the international ecumenes and he takes part in the radio programme "Rondom het-woord" on truth and reconciliation in South Africa; BNS HRB CV presentations 1995, several appearances in the Western Cape; BNS 41.32 In 1996 at an anti-racism conference at the UWC, along with the SACC; BNS 36.14, on 13–15/01/1999 a conference at the UWC together with the Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship on "Race, ethnicity, reconciliation in SA – a multicultural and comparative dialogue"; BNS HRB CV. In 2000, HRB publishes an article "Die bevryding van Kain? Etiese nadenke oor die dader in die versoeningsproses", *Scriptura* 69(1): 111–124.

78 BNS 41.16, with Minister Dullah Omar, 17/08/1996, and with Pres. N Mandela on 29/08/1996.

die Weskaap.⁷⁹ He was co-editor of a book on *remembrance and healing*⁸⁰ and, in 1997 to 1999, he buried himself in the course of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's process and shared his perspectives in in several contexts with others.⁸¹

The world ecumenes had special appreciation for Botman's directive contributions to focus the world's attention theologically on the current economy of exclusion as well as on the economic order that can provide hope and justice for all people and for the environment. His distinguishing theological leadership, as chairperson at the 1995 Kitwe assembly in Zambia, contributed towards a necessary Reformed perspective from Africa presented at the 1997 Debrechen meeting of the WCRC in Hungary. At this event, the WCRC decided to embark on a road of confession (*processus confessionis*) with the world's economic order and the processes of globalisation. In light of his close involvement in this process and his prominence in ecumenical circles he preached in April at the Jubilee 2000 service in the St George's cathedral, Cape Town, where the amnesty of Mozambique's debt was requested from the World Bank.⁸²

A number of WCRC international regional conferences analysed the economic challenges theologically and socially,⁸³ and in 2004 in Accra,

79 *Until peace and righteousness meet, a challenge to churches and Christians in the Western Cape* (translated).

80 BNS 37.15–16, HR Botman and R Petersen (eds), 1996. *To remember and to heal*. Cape Town: Human & Rousseau.

81 For example BNS14.4, 'Enkele Teologiese Perspektiewe op die Waarheids- en Versoeningsvraagstuk'. Presentation. Youth ministry. Early 1997; BNS 41.20, Event speaker, 'Tygerberg Gespreksforum'. Theme: "The past and reconciliation in South Africa", 1997.

82 BNS 16.1, and 36.21, Ex-pres. K Kaunda of Zambia and the ex prime minister's wife, Graca Machel, made contributions; BNS 36.20, On 12/03/2000 he is a speaker at the Church week of the ecumenical Council of Church Cooperation at Stellenbosch, with the theme: "Followers of Christ in a new century".

83 For example BNS 16.4, 2001, 26–31 March. WCRC Cape Town (Stellenbosch) Consultation. "A continuing journey toward a covenanting/ confessing movement, for economic justice and life on earth. Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth (*processus confessionis*)"; also see BNS 21.2, the 2003 report of HRB at the WCRC, "Consultant's report on Covenanting for justice in the economy and the earth".

Ghana, a clear confessional position was taken that was in favour of greater economic and ecological justice.⁸⁴

In the ecumenical EFSA⁸⁵ rank, he was chairperson for 16 years and involved in a large number of conferences and forum discussions. Role players from a variety of disciplines and associations were brought together in the search for solutions for difficult challenges in our society.⁸⁶ The *social inclusion of people* was a decisive focus in his handling of the EFSA agenda.⁸⁷

84 12 August 2004, *The Accra Confession: Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth*. The Confession of Accra was accepted by the previous World Communion of Reformed Churches' (WCRC; since 2012) 24th General Meeting in Accra, Ghana (2004) based on the theological conviction that the injustices of today's global economy with regard to the economy and the environment of the Reformed family requires a family to, react as a matter of faith in the gospel of Jesus Christus. The Accra declaration calls Reformed Christians from across the world to get involved in the injustice as an integral part of their churches' witness ministry; In support of Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si*, the WCRC issued a statement in June 2015 with specific reference to paragraph 20 of the Accra statement which emphasises God's economy of grace for the whole creation.

85 BNS Addendum 2, Ecumenical Foundation of Southern Africa (EFSA).

86 BNS HRB Addendum 2. For example the EFSA conference on Ecology in 1994; the EFSA & NRASD workshop on "Globalization, poverty, Women and the church in SA" on 16/02/1999; the EFSA and CTI National Church & development conference on Justice and Responsibility, conversations on the foundations of society, challenges of the 21st century. Botman's presentation "Discipleship and citizenship in SA"; EFSA and the Tutzing academy in Germany on the mobilisation of social capital on 02/03/2003; the EFSA and Evangelical Churches in Germany on "Exploring Church-Business cooperation, responding to the HIV/Aids challenge", a German-South African Agenda 21 project. Botman spoke as president of the SACC on "The challenge of the HIV/Aids pandemic to the church and business"; at the 2004 EFSA Law and Religion conference, Botman spoke on "Religion and law: facing the challenge"; in the May 2004 German-South African church conference that EFSA and the German EED and GKKE convened on "Ten years of democracy in SA: the role of the churches in SA", Botman was involved as the vice-rector of the SU and the president of the SACC; at the July 2004 EFSA & SACC conference "Breaking the grip of poverty in South Africa, 2004–2014" through a new partnership between the religious sector and the government (and other partners); at the 2008 workshop of EFSA, experts with regard to good government from Berlin and the Catholic Parliamentary call office on "Democratic budget policy?" Botman spoke on Good governance: Which role for the churches?; in a cooperation between EFSA, the Protestant academy of Tutzing and the governments of Bavaria and the Western Cape is focused on globalisation between 1999–2010 and on future planning between 2011 and 2014.

87 From a conversation with EFSA director, Dr R Koegelenberg, November 2015; BNS HRB Addendum 2, the closing paragraph of the Berlin statement on 6 May 2004, underlines Botman's attitude: "Since the problems and challenges of South Africa mirrors the global challenges we face between North and South, rich and poor, we invite our German partners in the Church and government to be our partners in this process. We are looking forward to the continuation of this dialogue, to seeking solutions through joint studies and conferences, and to translate this dialogue into action that will benefit the poor in the world."

Botman was often appointed in leadership roles and had to lead the way in a clear and fundamental manner. This responsibility stimulated him to search for more knowledge of and deeper insight into a variety of matters. Several examples from his multiple ecumenical interactions confirm this.⁸⁸

In February 1998, he delivered a valued presentation on important theological issues during the 100th anniversary of the Abraham Kuyper Stone lectures at the Theological Seminary at Princeton in the USA.⁸⁹ That same year, he became a formal member of the international Academy of Practical Theology.⁹⁰

In 1999 and 2000, he led the Reformed delegation of the WCRC in several dialog sessions with the Roman Catholic Church leadership.⁹¹ In the year 2000, when he was also dean of Theology at the UWC and the classes moved to Stellenbosch, he became a Campbell Scholar research fellow at the Columbia Theological Seminary in Atlanta on “The mission of God in the world of the 21st century”.⁹² Apparently he flourished under the pressure. His contributions and presentations in church and theological regard totalled more than forty in 2000 and he also published seven directive articles for church and society.⁹³ During this time, he also became a member

88 BNS HRB Collection, Botman’s CV shows the particular extent and versatile nature of his worldwide involvement in the ecumenes. By what is indicated elsewhere in this overview he was also member of the SACC ExCo and the Church Leaders’ forum 1990–1994 and of the host group for the “eminent Person’s delegation of the WCC” 1993; Executive member of the national religion initiative for development and welfare in SA 1997, chairperson of the URC Cape’s ecumenical committee 1994–1998.

89 BNS 39.12, for example on 12/03/1998 great gratitude from the Princeton Theological Seminary; BNS 39.16, on 11/05/1998 from G Klaaren, Wesleyan University; in 2013, HRB received the Abraham Kuyper award from the Princeton University for his distinguishing contributions with regard to public theology.

90 BNS 39.11. Communication to HRB from Prof RR Osmer, Theological seminary, Princeton.

91 BNS. See communication M Owen to HRB re the Roman Catholic Reformed dialogue – 3th session, Rome 13–19/09/2000, and the need for an overview of the planned presentations (31/03/2000; 15/05/2000).

92 BNS 16.2, see Nov/Dec 2000 HRB Research report. He worked under the guidance of the famous Walter Brueggemann. As outcome, HRB published two articles. His focus on hope was already visible in his presentation on 26 September: “South Africa and the challenge of hope: a contextual and historical analysis”.

93 BNS HRB CV, on “Dissipelskap en praktiese teologie” in the SA regard; “Etiek en sosio-politieke transformasie”, a view on a model for partnerships in the public arena; “Is bloed dikker as

of a research group at the Ecumenical Institute Bossey in Switzerland on “Ecumenical social ethics”⁹⁴ and of a research group in “theological anthropology” at the Center for Theological Inquiry (CTI) in Princeton.⁹⁵

In 2001, he works in SACC regard along with an ecumenical presentation by the churches and presents it in October on behalf of the work group at the responsible parliamentary committee with regard to the policy on the control of conventional weapons.⁹⁶ Shortly hereafter, in 2003, he becomes president of the SACC and his public appearances in this regard increases. In this role, he provides guidance on a variety of matters in national church and public circles.⁹⁷

In ecumenical circles he became known as a critical but mild thinker, a bridge builder who could convey his own insight with conviction and at the same time go out of his way to include others in the search for clearer perspective and a more just tomorrow.

PREACHER OF THE GOSPEL OF HOPE

Botman’s enthusiastic hope and vision for a healed and responsible church and a society that includes, cherishes and, practises justice and cares for all, was inspired by his study of the Bible and beloved hymns.⁹⁸ This focus

geregtigheid?” on the inheritance of Abraham Kuyper in SA; “Moraliteit in die nuwe SA” on the role of religion; “Die kerk afgeskort of die kerk versoen?” as the SA theological and historical dilemma; “Teologie na apartheid” with a focus on paradigms and development in the SA public theologies; and “Die bevryding van Kain” ethical thought on the doer of the reconciliation process.

94 BNS 21.10 from 2000 with famous ethical thinkers together like Bob Goudzwaard, Julio de Santa Ana, Pedro Morazin, Ninan Koshy, Douglas Meeks.

95 BNS 21.3–9, Center for Theological Inquiry from 2002.

96 BNS 16.5.

97 BNS Collection, for example in Aug 2003 SACC central committee on “churches unite against poverty”, as president at the SACC national conference in July 2004, minister at two honouring events for Beyers Naudé in 2004; at the opening of the centre for the “healing of the memories 2005”, focus in the SACC on matters like marriage and same-sex relationships, the elections in Zimbabwe, the establishment of the National Religious Leaders Forum in critical regard with the SA government; in 2006 again the focus on violent crime and the need for guidelines in this kairos.

98 Zions’ hymns that he himself was a fan of, included: 378, ‘Die kerk se hoop en ere’; 291, ‘God is die liefde’; 18, ‘God wat die groot heelal regeer’; 218, ‘Heer, ek hoor van ryke seën’; 333, ‘Heer, u Woord, die dierbare gawe’; 233, ‘Kyrie, eleison’; 194, ‘Jesus het reg op heerskappy’; 92, ‘Joy to the world – the Lord has come’; 81, ‘Kom alle getroues, vrolik en vol vreugde’; 10, ‘Kom, dank nou

strengthened his own spirit and helped him to cope with the demands of life that he had to handle alongside others. He thought about the Word, preached about it, emphasised clear phrases from it⁹⁹, led and comforted others from it and was himself carried by it, right to the end of his life. Shortly before his death, he still conducted mediations and preached on national radio.¹⁰⁰

In sermons, meditations, presentations and prayers he often switched around the order of 1 Corinthians 13:13 to let the light clearly fall on the big and general importance of hope. With emphasis on the importance of it in our context, he consistently focused the hope in his application on the transformation of the church and society.

Even after he became rector of Stellenbosch University, he preached at the laying of the foundation¹⁰¹ of a Youth Care Centre in Bloemfontein in the URC Heatherdale in Bloemfontein, the congregation where he himself grew up as the child of a minister. In an inspiring plea based on Isaiah 42:13–17 he strongly impressed on the youth to become the anti-spiral for the violence and moral decay which characterises our time and threatens to engulf everything. His advice was to find themselves five other young people as their trusted friends. Do not involve yourself with people who seek your demise and do not really want to support you, he said. Also look for five inspiring adults that you can follow with confidence as good role models who you can rely on at any time, who have your interests at heart. Concentrate on them and in that way become part of the anti-spiral that can bring the spiral of violence and moral decay to a standstill. As your anti-spiral gains greater momentum, you bring life and hope to the community.

almaal God'; 315, 'Lig na die donker, vrede na stryd'; 271, 'My hart, myself, myself, my lewe'; 260, 'Neem my lewe, laat dit, Heer'; 77, 'O die goeie tyding'; 325, 'Ons Vader wat woon in die hemel'; 285, 'The new commandment that I give to you'; refer to B Botman.

99 BNS 18.1–19.16, during 2002 and 2003 he participated in the radio programme, "Die Bybel in ons lewe", with Prof BC Combrink on chapters from Matthew, Mark, Luke and Acts; foci on, for example, justification and justice, discipleship, escatology, God as Father of the fatherless, our hope in Christ.

100 BNS 42.51, notes, contemplations. His focus with reference to John 15 on our lives that is planted in the Vine, who carry fruit like vine shoots and taste pleasant for the church and society, were some of his last contemplations on the radio.

101 BNS 42.25, video recording, 20 July 2008.

On 23 January 2003, he preaches at the centennial celebration of the Rhodes Trust and the establishment of the Mandela-Rhodes Foundation.¹⁰² He pondered perspectives from Psalm 126 and explained that it actually is two poems that carried people's hope in two phases after their return from exile. Initially there is joy and jubilation over their release from slavery! Then comes the sobering realisation – a second, deeper and more expensive transformation is necessary, there is a need for “turning of the turnings” to further turn over that which has been turned over.

One sentence from his sermon indicated his comprehension of what this turning means in our context, of the theology and of his own dream for a changed, transformed, just and peaceful society. At the same time it gives perspective on his visionary career as manager and leading figure in the church, Stellenbosch University and in other societal contexts. He reminds his audience of the public warning of judge Arthur Chaskalson, the previous president of the Constitutional Court, in May 2000, namely that we are not realising our future vision as contained in the constitution. He reformulates the judge's verdict, in light of Psalm 126: “Another way of looking at matters,” he said, “is to say that we were very successful with our broad transformation. We can be very proud of the instruments of our broad democracy, of the progress of our educational system, about the broadening of access to health care in the country, about the restructuring of a civil society, about the commitment of the business, about the progress of environmental awareness and the flowering in arts and culture. But broad transformation in itself is not a miracle drug. At a certain point, the realisation hits us that it has to be followed up with deep Transformation.”

The second poem proclaims the hope of singing people looking for a deepening of the transformation in their society, he explained. “It is the deepening of the transformation that repairs the dignity of those who struggle to make an existence in the most secluded town of our country. It indicates the necessity of a deepening of equality ‘*so that the daughter of a farmworker can have the same opportunity for success as the son of the farmer*’.”

102 BNS 42.14.

He often reflected on Psalm 126 and confronted the status quo with the psalms' hopeful transformation focus.¹⁰³ One such a time was at the 2003 synod of the DRCSA.¹⁰⁴ On the typed English copy of his sermon in January 2003, probably for an event at a URC service, he wrote in his own handwriting three applicable hymns¹⁰⁵ and the following words in the text on the hope of the youth: "*The hope of the farmworker's daughter and the farmer's son is the same.*"

The focus on the transforming, hope-giving power of the Gospel for all, is rightly associated with the core of Botman's thinking and life work by people inside and outside of the church. He himself actively strove towards visible unity, true reconciliation and compassionate justice in the church as well as in the secular society, as the deeper transformation, the turning around of the heart that we all have to undergo together. This focus he promoted in open and captivating communication as well as in cooperation with everyone around him and he lived it out personally in several areas. And through his visionary thinking and brave actions, along with other role players, in his last decade, especially involved in practical projects and processes in and around the life of Stellenbosch University, he helped embody this deeper turning practically and credibly in relationships, structures and processes. In his very last appearance on behalf of the University he clearly focused on a transforming society that will give everyone opportunities and support, especially those who struggle to get by.¹⁰⁶

103 BNS 42.17. Opening service, 3 Feb 2008, 150th Festival year of the Faculty of Theology SU. Botman preaches with reference to Ps 126 and 1 Cor 7:29, among others the point of deeper inversion, "which wasn't as easy as we'd hoped", with reference to the coming over of the Faculty of Theology from UWC to Stellenbosch in 2000. Sound recording, NG Moederkerk, Stellenbosch.

104 Notes of presentation on "Ons roeping t.o.v. armoede in Suid-Afrika", 'Handelinge van die NGKSA-sinode 2003', p. H22, 4th day of sittings.

105 BNS 42.14. 'Nuwe Sionsgesange', No's 22 (Ps 100, 'Juig aarde juig voor God die Heer'), 378 ('Die Kerk se hoop en ere') en 270 ('Hart en hart in God verbonde').

106 BNS Addendum 3, see for example his many directive speeches as rector between 2007 and 2014. BNS Addendum 3, HRB's speech on behalf of the SU on 25 June 2014, during the cheque delivery for the Solomon Mahlangu Bursary Fund at Stias. He re-emphasises some of his already well-known perspectives: "I always say that talent is spread evenly throughout society, but not resources – unfortunately not ... that's the reality. But we don't have to accept that reality. We can change it. We can do something to ensure the 'daughter of the farmworker' gets the same opportunities as the 'son of the farmer'. We can do it better with this new bursary fund", he said. "As we celebrate 20 years of democracy in South Africa, it is important to remember the

Two months before he was to take part at the URC Cape Synod in 2014 with the theme “Carriers of hope”, Russel Botman suddenly passed away. Six months later, the 2015 DRC Synod of the Western and southern Cape met with the theme, “Because we believe the gospel, we live with hope”. Indirectly, the two synods’ themes paid tribute to his vision and work. In both meetings¹⁰⁷ he was remembered as carrier of hope and his brothers and sisters could continue building on his legacy.

contributions of those who had sacrificed so that future generations could have a better life. Though many of them are no longer with us, the struggle continues ... in a very real sense: The struggle to ensure that the Constitutional promise of human rights for everyone – including socio-economic rights – is realised in practice.”

107 Cf. ‘KGA Verslag’ in agendas of ‘VGK Kaapland-sinode 2014’, pp. 435–483, and ‘NGKSA-sinode 2015’, A96-A119.

Receives honorary doctorate from Hope College, USA, 2014.

3. HIS LIFE AS THEOLOGIAN

Dirkie Smit¹

ON HIS THEOLOGICAL LIFE – RECOUNTING THE STORY

Russel Botman wrote his doctoral dissertation at the University of the Western Cape on *Discipleship as Transformation? Towards a Theology of Transformation. A Critical Study of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Theology* (1994).² In many ways, this title also described his whole life and thought – beginning with the years of his theological formation as a student, covering his years as minister in the local church and leader in the ecumenical movement, summarising his later years as scholar and public figure, and even including his final years as visionary thinker, often described as thought leader in circles of higher education.

His theological life was not merely a separate part of his life and work that can be easily distinguished from the rest, from preceding and following phases, from periods before he worked as theologian and periods when he no longer was a theologian. His life as theologian covered much more than only the five or so years of his formal theological studies (until 1981) and the merely eight or so years during which he taught theology, first at the University of the Western Cape (1994 to 1999) and then at Stellenbosch University (2000 to 2002). He was rather a theologian in every phase of his life – during the years in which he served the church in several capacities yet also when it was no longer explicitly present in his public speeches, official rhetoric and daily activities as university manager.

In short, his theological life *was* his life, or vice versa, his life *was* a theological life – and this life can perhaps best be described with the title of his doctoral project, namely *discipleship as transformation*, with a question mark.

1 Professor in Systematic Theology, Stellenbosch University.

2 Botman HR, 'Discipleship as Transformation? Towards a Theology of Transformation', unpublished doctoral dissertation, Bellville: University of the Western Cape, 1994.

One may distinguish several formative phases in his life as theologian. In his personal and narrative style he would often remember some decisive occasions, experiences and influences – *kairos*-moments, he sometimes called them – and use them to give audiences and readers some insight into the phases of development of his own convictions. The rhetorical style of many of his speeches was often autobiographical and anecdotal. It is therefore possible to gain an impression of his own formation and transformation as theologian by following some of these decisive moments and phases. New encounters would lead to new periods during which new questions and convictions became important to him.

Perhaps one could therefore tell the story of his life as a theologian by describing *ten* such overlapping phases of his life. During each successive phase he remained true to his earlier insights, convictions and commitments, but also added new concerns and new insights to a process of personal development, formation and transformation.

PASTORAL CARE, PASTORAL MINISTRY, PASTORAL THEOLOGY

As postgraduate student he was already interested in pastoral care and in 1981 he wrote the thesis for his Licenciade in Theology at the Western Cape in the area of pastoral care. Even then, his choice of topic was “Investigation into a comprehensive pastoral practice” – in which one can clearly hear some of the characteristic features of his later life and thoughts. One already senses the questioning and searching spirit as well as the longing for something more comprehensive, encompassing and inclusive than what was already available, known and being done.

In later years he would indeed be appointed at UWC to teach Practical Theology (first as Senior Lecturer in 1994 and then promoted to Associate Professor in 1999), the academic field which included pastoral theology. Some of his first academic lectures and publications would therefore be in pastoral care – and in them one again finds the search for more comprehensive and contextual approaches to the discipline. As pastor in the local congregation of the (then) Dutch Reformed Mission Church in Wynberg (from 1982 to 1993) and as role-player in the ecumenical church, both in South Africa and

internationally, these pastoral concerns remained central to his ministry and work.³

At the time, neither doing pastoral work nor teaching pastoral theology to future pastors were easy tasks. Pastoral concerns and pastoral issues were both urgent and extremely challenging in the churches and communities involved in the struggle. One could indeed argue that these were some of the deepest driving factors behind who Botman was and what he did and stood for, namely his pastoral concern and care for others, for human beings in their diverse difficulties and needs. He would – during these early years, but in fact continuing throughout his career – regularly begin his talks and papers with analyses of crises, despair, suffering, experiences of injustice and especially experiences of hopelessness.

In short, his theology was clearly deeply motivated by pastoral awareness and concern.

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY, ETHICS, “THEOLOGICAL LOGIC”

As student, however, he already decided to change his field of study and to pursue both his master’s and his doctoral work in Systematic Theology. It was his deeply felt intuition that the challenges facing both church and society in South Africa, and in his later years increasingly also the globalising world, were more fundamental than merely practical or even ethical questions. This conviction would play a major role in many of his later activities and contributions. Again and again he would argue that the problems – and therefore also the way forward – should not merely be regarded as practical, moral, ethical, apologetic or missiological challenges, but as fundamental theological problems.

This was all the more remarkable, since he was officially appointed as practical theologian (at UWC, in 1994) and later as missiologist (at Stellenbosch, in 2000), and he was widely known and respected as an

3 He often reflected on methodological issues related to the state of the theological disciplines he was expected to teach. He was clearly critical of the legacies which he inherited but also constructive and imaginative regarding new possibilities. See for example his ‘Discipleship and Practical Theology: The Case of South Africa’, *International Journal of Practical Theology* (2000) 4: 231–242.

ethicist and moral thinker. He taught, for example, postgraduate courses in Social Ethics at the University of Port Elizabeth from 1999 to 2001 and as Extraordinary Professor in Social Ethics at UWC from 2000 to 2002. Again and again, however, he would explicitly argue that the challenges, and therefore the ways forward, are theological in nature and *not* practical, apologetic, ethical or missiological.

Perhaps this conviction was born during a formative personal moment at the UWC in 1978. It happened in the class of Jaap Durand, at the time professor of Systematic Theology. They were discussing the work of the Swiss theologian Karl Barth, known as main author of the *Theological Declaration of Barmen*, which became the basis of the Confessing Church in Germany and played an important role in the opposition to Hitler. Durand challenged them to explain what they really regarded as *the* fundamental problem with apartheid. Not convinced by the mere practical and moral responses which they initially offered, they gradually came to see the more fundamental theological presuppositions which undergirded the ideology, policies and practices of apartheid. The students shared their insights with leading figures in the (then) Dutch Reformed Mission Church who submitted them to Synod. Eventually it became the basis of a crucially important decision by the Church, based on theological argument, and the beginning of a long and influential process of discernment, confession and action in South African churches and later also ecumenically.

Over the years, Russel Botman never tired of telling this story again and again when he explained both his own development and the development of the church struggle in South Africa to audiences.⁴ At the heart of this story was the insight, for him first surprising but then very enlightening, that *more* was at stake behind what could seem like practical politics than merely pragmatic considerations, ethical values or apologetic arguments.

4 For only three examples among many, see for example 'Narrative Challenges in a Situation of Transition', in HR Botman & R Petersen (eds), *To Remember and to Heal: Theological and Psychological Reflections on Truth and Reconciliation*, Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 1996, 39–40; also 'Gospel and Culture: Circles of Embrace or Lines of Exclusion', in MA Oduyoye & HM Vroom (eds), *One Gospel – Many Cultures: Case Studies and Reflections on Cross-Cultural Theology*, Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi BV, 2003, 149–171; and his 'Oor eenheid, geregtigheid en versoening by Jaap Durand', in E Conradie & C Lombard (eds), *Discerning God's Justice in Church, Society and Academy: Festschrift for JIF Durand*, Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 2009, 51–58.

This would become a key in his own life and thought and part of the reason why he would often search to take debates, challenges and conflicts to deeper levels of theological insight. In later years he would describe this “more” as the “theo-logic” or “theological logic” which really determines who we are, what we are concerned for and passionate about and what we are actively engaged in.⁵

CONFESSION, OBEDIENCE, FOLLOWING

In 1982, the year in which he was ordained as minister in the Dutch Reformed Mission Church, the *Belhar Confession* was drafted during the first synod which he attended (to be officially adopted at the next synod, in 1986). He would later explain that this moment of confession was for him the outcome of the process which began years earlier in their class at UWC, when they reflected theologically on apartheid.

He took *Belhar* very seriously and would in the years to come play an important role in interpreting its content and intentions, in many ways and in many contexts, and in embodying its convictions. He did this in the ecumenical church worldwide – in synods, commissions, study groups, consultations, documents and new confessional processes. He did this in South Africa – in church reunification processes, ecumenical leadership, public events, and academic conferences. In doing this, he reflected deeply on the three themes of the Confession, namely living unity, real reconciliation and compassionate justice, and about the challenges to embody these, but also took the underlying theological logic of *Belhar* very seriously and contributed perhaps more than most to argue on the basis of this logic when facing new questions.

He would for example often argue for what he regarded as *Belhar*’s theological logic (against other interpretations). He defended the conviction in *Belhar*’s conclusion that Jesus is the Lord (against different objections) and in fact argued that this conviction is the real key with which to understand the

5 See Smit DJ, “‘Making history for the coming generation’ – on the Theological Logic of Russel Botman’s Commitment to Transformation’, The First Russel Botman Memorial Lecture, 19 October 2015, published in *Stellenbosch Theological Journal* 1(2):607–632. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17570/stj.2015.v1n2.a29>

whole Confession. He reflected on the relation between doctrine and ethics in the church's confession of faith (over against major developments in the ecumenical movement, separating doctrine from ethics) and argued for the crucial importance of discipleship, ethics or obedience. He emphasised the importance of discipleship in *Belhar*.⁶

Over the years he gave, for example, some of the most penetrating analyses of theological developments within the Dutch Reformed Church, arguing – in the spirit of the class with Durand – that the deepest problem was that the DRC lacked a coherent theological discourse with which to face the challenges of our life and time. He argued that this Church was itself torn between the competing influences of different *kragvelde*, especially the (misunderstood) legacy of the Dutch theologian Abraham Kuyper and the (never fully appropriated) legacy of the Swiss theologian Karl Barth. Many commentators would later make use of this insightful analysis. In similar fashion, he would later give an evaluation of the Dutch Reformed Church's (revised) study document *Church and Society*, arguing that the problem already arose in the way it took culture, race and ethnicity as hermeneutical point of departure.⁷

In short, the issues addressed in *Belhar*, the theological logic of *Belhar* and the nature of the confessional moment and confessional act itself all remained integral to his theological life, since 1982.⁸ In 2010 he still wrote

6 For example his 'Barmen to Belhar: A Contemporary Confessing Journey', *NGTT* (2006) 47(1&2): 240–249; also his plenary address to the Synod of the Reformed Church in America, in Pella, Iowa, on 10 June 2007, in which he spoke at length about his personal journey with *Belhar* as "a message of hope", under the theme of "our common future". See 'The Confession of Belhar and Our Common Future', unpublished but available on websites.

7 See for example "'Dutch" and Reformed and "Black" and Reformed in South Africa: A Tale of Two Traditions on the Move to Unity and Responsibility', in RA Wells (ed), *Keeping Faith*, 2016, 85–105; also 'Is Blood Thicker than Justice? The Legacy of Abraham Kuyper for Southern Africa', in LE Lugo (ed), *Religion, pluralism and public life: Abraham Kuyper's legacy for the twenty-first century*, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2000, 342–359; as well as 'Belhar and the White Dutch Reformed Church – Changes in the Dutch Reformed Church: 1974–1990', in W Weisse & C Anthonissen (eds), *Maintaining Apartheid or Promoting Change? The Role of the Dutch Reformed Church in a Phase of Increasing Conflict in South Africa*, Münster: Waxmann, 2004, 123–134 (= *Scriptura* 76 (2000):33–42).

8 He was very well aware of being a Reformed theologian and standing in the Reformed tradition and often wrote approvingly of the Reformed tradition, confessions and figures like John Calvin and Karl Barth, although he was always careful to qualify the kind of Reformed theology he

in a moving foreword to a study by Johan Botha and Piet Naudé that *Belhar* “will perhaps one day be remembered as the gospel word that came too early for my generation, but that was joyfully lived by the faithful of the next generation.”⁹

The Belhar Confession was ahead of its time ... My generation and its fellows in all communities in South Africa still find ourselves in the grip of bygone political and church conflicts ... Our generation is saturated with conflicts from the past ... The dark glasses of our opposing views and our stubborn aggression distort and darken the light that shines on Belhar ... Even for us, Belhar came too early. We do not always know how to practise simple obedience. We struggle with past and present conflicts. We are no better than anyone else of our generation. We share in the disobedience of an entire generation ... Precisely for this reason the Belhar Confession will perhaps one day be remembered as the gospel word that came too early for my generation, but that was joyfully heard by the faithful of the next generation ... As I come to know the upcoming generation better, I have no doubt that Belhar will be a staff for them. Jesus is Lord!

CHRISTOLOGY, IMAGINATION, CREATIVITY

Probably motivated by these experiences, discoveries and convictions, he decided to write his master's thesis on Christology. It was a study of an influential Dutch systematic theologian in the 20th century, also widely respected in the ecumenical church, Hendrikus Berkhof. He called his thesis *Jesus, nóg God, nóg mens?* It was as difficult a theme as one could find, going to the heart of the Christological reflections of the church on the person and work of Jesus Christ. He found in Berkhof's approach both a historical (scientific and evolutionary) as and a covenantal perspective. Already here, in his master's thesis, he would deliberately add a question mark to the title of his thesis, as indication that he agreed with Berkhof's question, but not with his answers. Both these themes which he found in Berkhof's questions

practised, for example: “Rooted in life and its struggles, Reformed theology is at the same time deeply personal (never merely private), existential (never disinterested), congregational (never dislocated), ecumenical (never parochial), and contextual (never ahistoric and abstracted). This paper grows from these roots,” in ‘A Cry for Life in a Global Economic Era’, in WM Alston & M Welker (eds), *Reformed Theology: Identity and Ecumenicity*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003, 375–384.

9 See his foreword, Johan Botha & Piet Naudé's *Good News to Confess*, Wellington: Bible Media, 2011, 11–13.

– the importance of history and of covenant – would remain central in Botman’s own thought over the following years.¹⁰

Equally remarkable, however, was the imaginative and creative style of scholarship which his work at the time already promised, and which would become characteristic of his style of doing theology in later years. He was – always – far less interested in merely following and quoting and repeating the sources with which he was dealing, and far more interested in interpreting them (sometimes very freely) and using them, appropriating their ideas in his own construct and his own new argument. He deliberately created a distance from his sources, not simply interested in them because of what they said, but already responding to them in his own voice, often rephrasing them, claiming in his own words what he thought they were really all about, and packaging their ideas in his own new, constructive and always creative way.

In short, compared to his peers, he was a remarkably original thinker – and in his life as a theologian he would demonstrate this repeatedly over the years. He often surprised audiences and readers with his views, creative and original and unexpected. He certainly enjoyed doing that, and would often begin his talks with a slight smile and with words like “tonight I want to tell you something”, which always meant something that you probably have not thought of or do not see like this or have not expected. He enjoyed what was new, different, surprising, making a difference. In popular parlance, he thought outside the box like few others, already as postgraduate student.

Long before he used the term “thought leader” to describe his own role and the role of his university colleagues, but also his dream for every new generation of students, namely that they should all use their minds and knowledge to change their life-worlds, he was himself such a thought leader, because of this ability to think independently and imaginatively. This probably also explains his popularity as public speaker. He often received invitations to address synods and public and academic meetings. He would

10 Botman HR, ‘Jesus, nóg God, nóg mens? ’n Kritiese evaluering van die evolusionêre verbondmatige Christologie van Hendrikus Berkhof’ [Jesus, neither God, nor human. A critical study of the covenantal Christology of Hendrikus Berkhof], unpublished MTh thesis, cum laude, Bellville: University of the Western Cape, 1984.

also demonstrate this same independent spirit and creative freedom in his doctoral dissertation on the work of the German theologian and martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

CALLING, DISCIPLESHIP, TRANSFORMATION

Having been in the local ministry since 1982, he returned to theological studies almost a decade after he had received the MTh with distinction (in 1984), because he wanted to do part-time doctoral research. He submitted at the end of 1993 and received the DTh from the UWC in March 1994. In some ways, it was not just a normal, academic dissertation. He once again took a certain freedom in the way he dealt with Bonhoeffer – the freedom of creative interpretation and re-construction, almost of dialogue and engagement. In the concluding argument, for example, he added a section which he called “Bonhoeffer and I”, not the kind of conclusion normally found in research dissertations, but in his case making clear precisely what he was doing, and why. Very deliberately he also added a final part on the liberation theologian Juan Luis Segundo, intrigued by Segundo’s notion of a “fifth gospel”, meaning that followers of Jesus of Nazareth today are not merely repeating, but in fact going further, making new history, finding new ways of their own, continuing the gospel in history.

Several of the – personal, but also theological – themes already at work in his life were woven together in the argument of his dissertation, particularly the notions of calling, discipleship and transformation. Already in the foreword he explained that he did not pursue doctoral studies merely for academic reasons, but in response to a challenge by Beyers Naudé that churches should seriously reflect on a vision for a future South Africa and their own role in such a future. Botman saw his own research as a response to that question.

His argument therefore began with critical discussions of other proposals by theologians and church leaders at the time, also attempting to provide such orientation. He argued how and why he differed from those other positions. This was anything but a mere academic endeavour; these were fiercely contested public debates at the time, in both church and society.

A footnote explained that he started his search for a theme with an interest in “vocational spirituality,” the kind of spirituality that would inform and inspire the church’s life according to the calling of the gospel during such times and challenges.¹¹ This search led him to read about discipleship – as an important strand of Christian spirituality – which eventually led him to study Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the martyr-theologian from the Nazi-period in Germany. Bonhoeffer famously wrote a book called *The Cost of Discipleship*, which Botman also studied, but within the larger context of Bonhoeffer’s whole life and work (including his early, formative years as theological student and in the ministry as well as his later years as leading thinker in the church struggle and the early ecumenical movement), as well as his writings from prison, both personal and intimate to family and friends, but also reflective and scholarly, for example his essays on *Ethics*.

For Bonhoeffer, notions like form, formation and transformation were all of crucial importance. His thoughts on the church, the world, and in fact the whole of reality was based on his conviction that Jesus Christ is at the heart of all reality – whether known or unknown, acknowledged or not – and is taking on form in history and the world. Bonhoeffer therefore wrote about an ethics of formation and reflected on the importance of ways of transformation. Botman explained that he deliberately studied Bonhoeffer “as a theologian of transformation” and the result was his dissertation called ‘Discipleship as Transformation?’ – with a question mark and with the subtitle ‘Towards a Theology of Transformation’.¹² This title describes both his life up to that moment – his personal search for discipleship as transformation in South Africa at the time – as well as the phases of his life to follow. Now he was appointed to teach theology at UWC and after only a few years at Stellenbosch, where again after only three years he would take up responsibilities of university leadership.

His commitment to transformation as vice-rector and rector thus clearly did not begin when he was appointment to the management structures. On the

11 ‘Discipleship as Transformation? Towards a Theology of Transformation’, 43, footnote 128.

12 He would later often clarify and further develop his complex understanding of transformation, see for example ‘Theology after Apartheid: Paradigms and Progress in South African Public Theologies’, in WM Alston (ed), *Theology in the Service of the Church*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000, 36–51.

contrary, his willingness to become involved in university management was rather the result of his commitment to transformation from already long before. He had been committed to transformation and then increasingly found a rationale for that commitment in theological views on discipleship as transformation.

UNITY, RECONCILIATION, JUSTICE

Precisely because his theology was always so deeply personal and existential, so integrated with his life and work, one can continue to trace the further development of his life as theologian after the dissertation and his ever-shifting focus to new insights and new concerns by following some of the major phases of his life and work. New theological agendas with new insights and new language almost seem to correspond with invitations and opportunities during each new phase of his life, with new roles which he had to play and new responsibilities which he had to fulfil.

While he was actively involved – as local minister, but also as community and church leader – in pursuing issues of church unity, reconciliation and justice, he became so well-known and widely respected that he received many requests, invitations and opportunities to speak, network, travel and collaborate with others. One such request was for example to serve as an international peace associate of the National Peacemaking Programme of the Presbyterian Church of America, which he did between 1985 and 1990.¹³ This invitation meant that he would travel and talk to congregations and other groups about peace and peace-making in situations of conflict, a role for which he was well equipped, given his experiences in the conflict-ridden apartheid South Africa at the time, given his theological formation, discernment and insights, and given his personality, character and integrity.

During the same time he also participated in many similar local processes, in the Western Cape and in South Africa, amongst others in regular discussions led by the Institute for Contextual Theology on black theology and on the

13 It was during such a visit that he experienced the disastrous earthquake that struck the San Francisco Bay Area on 17 October 1989. That same night he called from Berkeley to ask me to marry Beryl and himself, later that year, in early November.

(contested) relation between race and class in the struggle.¹⁴ For him these were formative moments, also because he was at the same time involved in the never-ending discussions and conflicts about race, ethnicity and culture in the circles of the divided Dutch Reformed Churches. Together, these issues – conflict, peace, unity, reconciliation, race, identity, ethnicity, culture – therefore became a cluster of questions on which he began to focus and with which he would remain occupied for times to follow. In theological circles, within South Africa but gradually also internationally, he would for example make contributions regarding reconciliation, forgiveness, amnesty, dealing with the offender, the relation between reconciliation and justice, forms of justice, restitution, and overcoming conflict and violence.

Already during public and ecumenical discussions *before* the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established, in fact during tense controversies on whether such a commission was at all necessary and if so, what kind of commission, he was actively engaged. Together with his colleague at the UWC, Robin Peterson, he edited a collection of essays called *To Remember and to Heal*.¹⁵ Again, during the hearings as well as afterwards, he played a leading ecumenical and theological role, through public debate, church involvement and theological contributions.¹⁶ He gave speeches, published sermons, participated in decisions, helped influence the public discourse of reception, commented on the submissions during the so-called faith hearing, and spoke on invitation at many meetings, both in church and academic circles, on issues related to reconciliation, in the broad sense of the word.

14 For example his account in 'Gospel and Culture: Circles of Embrace or Lines of Exclusion', in MA Oduyoye & HM Vroom (eds), *One Gospel – Many Cultures: Case Studies and Reflections on Cross-Cultural Theology*, Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi BV, 2003, 149–171.

15 Botman HR & Petersen R (eds), *To Remember and to Heal: Theological and Psychological Reflections on Truth and Reconciliation*, Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 1996.

16 For example 'The Offender and the Church', in J Cochrane, JW de Gruchy & S Martin (eds), *Facing the Truth: South African Faith Communities and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, Cape Town: David Philip, 1999, 126–131; also 'Towards the embrace of political reconciliation', *The Way: Review of Contemporary Christian Spirituality* (1999) 39(4):338–348.

PUBLIC LIFE, PUBLIC CHURCH, PUBLIC THEOLOGY

Gradually, however, yet another factor would increasingly become part of his theological life. He very soon became an active and well-known public figure, and as church leader he was also involved in many issues of public life. He became increasingly convinced (again thanks to Bonhoeffer) that discipleship and citizenship went hand in hand, in fact, that in a democratic society disciples were also precisely called *as* citizens.¹⁷

Already during the turbulent years of 1990 to 1994, he served for example as vice-moderator of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church and also as member of the executive committee of the South African Council of Churches (SACC). From then on, his ecumenical and public role would only increase. He led the Southern African Alliance of Reformed Churches and was approached to make himself available as general secretary of the SACC, as theological secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and as director of the ecumenical Research Institute at Bossey, in Switzerland. He received many invitations to give sermons during major public events and to address public meetings. In short, he increasingly became a public face and a public voice and this challenged him to reflect seriously on the public role of the church. The term “public” became part of his vocabulary – and it would increasingly be the case during the rest of his life. He focused his mind on the so-called public nature, the public role, the public witness, the public task of the church and, eventually, on the public church doing public theology.

Shortly after his appointment at the UWC (in 1994), the name of his department was changed from Practical Theology to Christianity and Society (1996). With his appointment at Stellenbosch (2000), he changed the self-description of his position and role from Missiology to Missiology, Ecumenism and Public Theology. The Beyers Naudé Center for Public Theology was founded very soon afterwards, as his idea and initiative.¹⁸ All

17 For example the argument on citizenship in ‘Towards a world-formative Christianity in South Africa’, in M Guma & L Leslie Milton (eds), *An African challenge to the church in the 21st century*, Cape Town: Salty Print, 1997, 72–79.

18 For an account of his involvement in the establishment of the Beyers Naudé Centre, see the interview in M Coetzee, R Müller & L Hansen (eds), *Cultivating Seeds of Hope: Conversations on the Life of Beyers Naudé*, Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 2015, 133–138.

these changes reflected an increasing focus on the place of theology, church and faith in public life. From now on, he was clearly concerned with the public nature and role of theology and church. Already earlier, since 1998, he served as the executive chairperson of the Ecumenical Foundation of Southern Africa (EFSA), and again still earlier, he was involved in the public witness of the DRMC and the whole DRC-family of churches.

ECUMENISM, ECONOMICS, ECOLOGY

Very soon this interest in public theology would take on a very specific new focus for him: a focus on the economy and ecology. Again, this was a growing awareness of a conviction that had already been present before – for example in his work on justice according to *Belhar*. As a result of invitations, however, he would now delve deeper than before into the theological logic, assumptions and convictions underlying what others would perhaps treat as merely moral and practical challenges.

In 1997 their family spent a research period at the Center of Theological Inquiry in Princeton, New Jersey. His initial project was on “Discipleship and Citizenship” and he intended to research what he had always regarded – strengthened by his doctoral work on Bonhoeffer – as the intimate relation between these two. He would later tell the story of what was almost a discovery for him, namely the importance of the economy for public life. Because the struggle in South Africa and the church’s involvement in the struggle had been so predominantly cast in the form of political questions and so-called church-state relations, he, like many other South African theologians, did not always take the economy seriously enough. This sabbatical period changed that, for him.¹⁹

He now increasingly talked and published on the Biblical notion of “oikos” or household – which includes the church as household of faith, but also

19 See his acceptance speech (‘Dread, Hope and the African Dream: An Ecumenical Collage’) when the Abraham Kuyper Prize was awarded to him in 2013 (unpublished paper, available on web). This prestigious prize is awarded annually by the Kuyper Center in Princeton for excellence in scholarship or public life, and previous recipients include the legal scholars John Witte, Andrew Young and Robert Seiple, all former USA ambassadors; Lord Jonathan Sacks, former Chief Rabbi of the Commonwealth; Marilyn Robinson, the prize-winning author; and Jan Peter Balkenende, former Dutch Prime Minister.

the ecumenical church, as well as the economy (as the laws governing our common life) and ecology (as the whole web of life).²⁰ He played a leading role in the so-called *processus confessionis* of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches concerning economic injustice and ecological destruction. He chaired the meeting of the Southern African Alliance of Reformed Churches in Kitwe, Zambia, in 1996 where a well-known call to the worldwide body was made and where he participated in the drafting of this so-called *Kitwe Declaration*, appealing amongst others to John Calvin, the Reformed tradition and *Belhar*. This call resonated in the Assembly of Debrecen in Hungary in 1997 where Botman again played a leading role in the decision of the Alliance to ask all member churches to consider whether their economic and ecological life is not perhaps in conflict with the faith of their confession.

Based on this decision, he was asked to participate in the WARC Project on Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth over the following years. Between 2001 and 2002 he accordingly spent time in Geneva, Switzerland, working closely with Setri Nyomi, the WARC General Secretary, and doing research on their documents and giving advice based on his research. This was another formative time for him. In 2002, for example, he was invited to take part in a consultation in the ecumenical think-tank at the Institute of Bossey, just outside Geneva, with the well-known ecumenical thinker Julio de Santa Ana, on sustainable development. This was the beginning of a process involving a series of consultations and publications that Botman clearly found interesting, important and instructive. When the *processus confessionis* process in the member churches therefore came to a certain conclusion at the next Assembly of the WARC in Accra, he made a contribution on the typically Reformed way of dealing with public life using the notion of covenant. This again eventually led to the well-known *Accra Declaration* in the form of a covenant, in the further reception processes in which he was once again involved.

20 For example 'The *Oikos* in a Global Economic Era. A South African Comment', in JR Cochrane & B Klein (eds), *Sameness and Difference*, Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2000, 269–280.

HUMANITY, HUMAN DIGNITY, HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Within this process of consultation and research, yet another notion became increasingly important in his own theological life, namely human dignity. Already during his time at the University of the Western Cape, a process of collaboration began with different Swedish ecumenical partners that would strengthen this insight, amongst others with Karin Sporre, a colleague in education and feminist theology. Together they hosted consultations on human dignity and published a volume called *Building a Human Rights Culture*, in which Botman contributed by writing on human dignity and economic globalisation, combining his two major concerns at the time.²¹

Again, this focus would from now on remain central to Botman's theological life. It was no surprise that this would play a role in his later initiatives as rector to pursue the Millennium Development Goals. In line with his own passion, the Theology Faculty would also decide to make human dignity its focus as part of this university-wide initiative. Botman gradually framed his interest in human dignity in terms of the more fundamental question concerning theological anthropology and now read and wrote about Christian views on being human. He eventually made that his focus during his sabbatical at the Center of Theological Inquiry in Princeton in 2003, once he realised that his original theme of discipleship and citizenship was too narrow to address the challenges of being human in the contemporary world and the dominant global economic and ecological realities.

When he was invited in 2010 to participate in John de Gruchy's interdisciplinary project on *The Humanist Imperative in South Africa* at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Studies (STIAS), he made a short but very insightful contribution, revealing many of his own deepest convictions and passions over many years, speaking about "a dignity-enriched humanism."²²

21 'Human Dignity and Economic Globalisation' in K Sporre & HR Botman (eds), *Building a Human Rights Culture*, Falun: Institutione för humaniora och språk, 2011, 20–34 (also in *NGTT* 45(1&2): 317–327).

22 'A Dignity-Enriched Humanism', in JW de Gruchy (ed), *The Humanist Imperative*, Stellenbosch: Sun Press & STIAS, 2011, 243–246.

He concluded this contribution by speaking about hope in the 21st century and once again this was a fundamentally important theme to him, with its roots dating back to his life as a theologian.

DESPAIR, HOPE, AGENCY

He dedicated his doctoral dissertation to his own children “and all the other children of South Africa, those who will know apartheid only by hearsay”. This was an allusion to an expression that Bonhoeffer once used in passing. He adapted Bonhoeffer’s words to his own situation, in order to express his hope about a future which few others at the time could see as clearly, namely a future which would be radically different from the realities of the past and present. He had a firm conviction that believers should allow the promised future to orientate and determine their priorities and actions in the present, rather than let the past (with its often painful histories) or even present realities (with their power and seeming matter-of-factness, suggesting and pretending that things cannot be different), form and shape who we are.

Early on, long before his dissertation, he wrote a meditation in which he explained that the Pauline ethics – one could say the ethics of the New Testament and therefore theological ethics – is eschatological ethics, an ethics determined by the future and therefore by hope. He was moved by Paul’s argument in 1 Corinthians 7:29–31 – according to many scholars, key to understanding Paul’s own mind – that believers should live “as if not”, as if the present realities of marriage, work, possessions, sadness and happiness, do not have the last word in shaping who we are. In the cross and resurrection of Jesus, Botman argued, following Paul, believers have seen that “the form of this world is passing away”, that whatever may seem important and powerful are all passing away, that a new future is taking shape, that Christ himself is taking form in history and the world, which means that what we see and experience are being trans-formed, changed, made different and new.²³

23 Botman HR & Smit DJ, ‘1 Corinthians 7:29–31 “To live ... as if it were not!”’, *JTSA* (1988) 65:73–79; also Smit DJ, *Om te leef asof nie: Meditasies opgedra aan Russel Botman*, Wellington: Bybel Media, 2014.

For Botman, these convictions were real, personal and inspiring. During his later studies of Bonhoeffer, many of these notions would be rephrased, in Bonhoeffer's terminology, but the structure of his thought remained the same.

Bonhoeffer for example distinguished between ultimate and penultimate, arguing that our everyday involvement with the penultimate should be formed and transformed by our hope in the ultimate. He explained that believers should therefore pray, long and hope for the kingdom rather than equate their own programmes and policies with the ultimate. Bonhoeffer also argued that "who"-questions are therefore central (when thinking about Christ, but also about ourselves). He believed that being and belonging go hand in hand, that individuality and sociality may not be separated, that Christ was the human being for others, that the church is called as church for others, and that discipleship is about being there for others. Bonhoeffer claimed that faith and obedience are therefore closely related, those who believe are obedient and those who are obedient believe. He thought that the ultimate question about our own lives is not whether we are successful in our attempts to escape without harm and with honour from difficult circumstances, but rather what we could and should do now while envisioning the next generation's future, even if what we have to do may seem humbling and humiliating to ourselves. Bonhoeffer defended an ethics of responsibility, oriented towards hope for the children, for the generation "to whom the future belongs".

All these convictions only further confirmed Botman's own intuitions and beliefs and increasingly provided him with new vocabulary and rhetoric with which to express his own hopes and commitments – for the children of South Africa, for the role of the church, for an ethics of responsibility, for sustainable development, for dealing with the tragedies and legacies of our past, for facing the injustices and inequalities of our present times.

We cannot escape our theological responsibility to 'those to whom the future belongs' in obedience to God. The very existence of the generation of the future constitutes an 'ethos of responsibility' defined in terms of the future. The theological quest of any generation must never forget the generation to whom the future belongs.²⁴

24 "Dutch" and Reformed and "Black" and Reformed in South Africa', 103–104.

He called this rhetoric a theo-logic, a theological logic, or preferably a praxeologic – the latter in order to underline the importance of praxis, of agency, of action and doing, of engagement and involvement, of the link between faith and obedience, between spirituality and discipleship, between Jesus Christ and transformation.

He included two mottoes in his dissertation, in late 1993. The first one was a quote from Proverbs 29:18 saying where there is no vision, the people perish. He replaced vision with revelation. Whenever the people do not receive glimpses of hope of a better future, they perish. The second quote was from two Brazilian brothers and liberation theologians, Leonardo and Clodovis Boff, according to whom men and women without a dream will not mobilise themselves for transformation and seek to renew the foundations of society, but that Christians believe that such a dream is real, because they have seen it in Jesus Christ. These two mottoes clearly expressed his own convictions.

All these early convictions, again confirmed at the time of his doctoral studies and in his encounter with Bonhoeffer, received new impetus when he was invited early in 2000 to participate in Atlanta, Georgia, in an international and inter-disciplinary research and dialogue project on hope. He was, of course, invited on the basis of his reputation and international theological profile, but in the encounter with well-known scholars from a variety of contexts he was further strengthened in these convictions about the importance of hope.

As part of this project, Botman made several contributions on hope, some of which were published in the final volume called *Hope for the World*.²⁵ It was on his return, however, that he would deal again and again with the theme of hope, in many of his public speeches and writings. He almost immediately used it as theme for his inaugural lecture as professor

25 The invitation was to be part of the Campbell Scholars for 2000, together with well-known people like Walter Brueggemann, Douglas John Hall, Damayanthi Niles, Ofelia Ortega and Janos Pasztor, on the theme "Mission as Hope in Action". Botman delivered an initial paper on 'South Africa and the Confession of Belhar: A Contemporary Confessing Journey toward Mission' and a final contribution on 'Hope as the Coming Reign of God'. Both were published in W Brueggemann (ed), *Hope for the World. Mission in a Global Context*, Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001, respectively 31–34 and 69–82.

in Stellenbosch, *The End of Hope or New Horizon of Hope?*²⁶ He taught a master's module in social ethics both at the University of the Western Cape and at the (then) University of Port Elizabeth on “imagining social hope” – imagining, to him, was a mental activity of key importance. He decided to speak on “hope for the city” when invited to address a large gathering of church leaders on “turning the tide” in Cape Town.²⁷ He spoke on hope when he addressed the General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in Accra, Ghana.²⁸ He spoke on “rejoicing in hope” during an international consultation on Reformed scholarship, as well as on several other occasions.²⁹

Sometimes, however, present realities can become so powerful, overwhelming and dominating that it can become extremely difficult, if not impossible, to see anything else and to imagine a different future. Such times and such experiences can lead to feelings of depression and despair – and therefore Botman never tired from addressing such feelings of social despondency and social despair. He was deeply aware of and concerned about the lack of hope and vision in the lives of many – and of the complex causes and reasons for such despair.³⁰ Again and again, over many years, the rejection of such hopelessness and the strengthening of personal and social hope would

26 ‘The End of Hope or New Horizon of Hope? An Outreach of Those in Africa who Dare to Hope’, Stellenbosch University, inaugural address, February 2001; also as *NGTT* (March and June 2002) 43(1&2):22–31.

27 ‘Turning the Tide of the City: An Ecumenical Vision of Hope’, *NGTT* (2004) 45(3&4):508–517. In this keynote speech, he interpreted the moral crisis of the city as in fact a crisis of hope. Hopelessness, he said, is the mother of apathy and despondency. He then made proposals for recovering a spirituality of “social hope”, once again telling the story of 1 Cor 7:29–31 and saying that “transformative living is living in the presence of the future inaugurated by Jesus Christ”, 513.

28 ‘Globalisation’s Threat to Human Dignity and Sustainability’ at the WARC 24th General Council in Accra, Ghana, unpublished paper.

29 ‘Rejoice in Hope: The Bible and the Current Crisis of Despair’, in WM Alston Jr & M Welker (eds), *Reformed Theology: Identity and Ecumenicity II: Biblical Interpretation in the Reformed Tradition*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007, 66–73.

30 Even his opening address to the International Conference of the Center of Theological Inquiry on 30 March 2001, later published as ‘Rejoice in Hope’, was originally announced as ‘The Bible and the Current Crisis of Despair’, and his acceptance speech at the Kuyper Prize ceremony dealt with the prevalence of “dread” in the contemporary world. In many papers during the years he would follow the analysis of the German theologian (later Bishop) Wolfgang Huber at a national conference of the South African Council of Churches during the apartheid years, who interpreted the “times of crisis” as “a crisis of hope”.

be part of his theological and public contributions, and therefore it was no surprise when it eventually became the agenda that would characterise his successive terms in university leadership.³¹

His appeal for a mind shift from excellence to significance, as well as his initiatives to motivate the institution as a whole to take on a project to bring hope by pursuing the MDG through outstanding expertise, research and knowledge production, must be understood against this background. Since 2004, he continued his life as theologian as a thought leader and social manager, although he no longer used explicit theological vocabulary and rhetoric, so that those who did not know his background might not have always understood the deepest motivations and convictions at work in “who” he intrinsically was.

In my current position as rector and vice-chancellor of Stellenbosch University, I have tried to dream with our students and staff a new dream, to hope anew. For me this arose partly out of my theological work, expressing the idea of confessing hope concretely. However, at this secular institution, the focus was more on the role of professors of different academic disciplines finding ways to put their sciences behind the most intractable problems of our society – and in that way professing their hope ... I see the recognition of my work in theology and public life through the Abraham Kuyper Prize as an expression of our common hope for a better future in the interest of the next generation – one that will know by hearsay, not only apartheid but also the current global economic crisis.³²

31 This was also the theme of his last explicitly theological speeches, namely his acceptance speech, ‘Dread, Hope and the African Dream: An Ecumenical Collage’, at the Kuyper Award ceremony in Princeton. For example, also Botman HR, ‘Hope in Africa. The Role of Universities in Times of Political Transition, particularly in the Context of Democratisation’, Talloires Network Leaders Conference, Madrid, 14–16 June 2011; ‘Taking Africa beyond the MDGs. The Role of Higher Education in Development’, in R Wilkinson & D Hulme (eds). *The Millennium Development Goals and Beyond. Global Development after 2015*, London: Routledge, 2012, 209–224; and ‘The Case for the Relevant University’, *South African Journal of Higher Education* 25(1):14–21, in which many of these ideas are effectively interwoven, up to the last words: “By using science in service of the community, we can help to make the world a better place. Future generations deserve nothing less”, 21; see also ‘Transforming Pedagogical Values’, his speech at the World Innovation Summit for Education, Doha, Qatar, December 2010.

32 ‘Dread, Hope and the African Dream: An Ecumenical Collage’, receiving the Abraham Kuyper Prize, Princeton, 2013.

ON HIS THEOLOGICAL LIFE – LOOKING BACK

Looking back, Russel Botman only enjoyed an extremely short professional career of teaching theology, hardly eight years (1994–2002). Before that he was a minister, after that he was in university management.

What is more, during those abnormally short eight years, both institutional changes within the two faculties where he was appointed and his own views on his academic role led to the fact that his job description was changed at least five times in immediate succession, from “pastoral theology” within “practical theology” to “Christianity and society” (all at the UWC) to “missiology” to “ecumenical theology” and “public theology” (all at Stellenbosch). Add to this his own training and expertise in “theological ethics” and that he, out of personal interest, belonged to the national scholarly society for “systematic theology” and even served as national chairperson of this academic association, it is obvious that he never had the time to establish himself fully in one specific academic field as a theologian.

Even more significant is that, of those eight years, he had to serve the last one as dean of the Faculty of Religion and Theology at UWC, a department in the process of closing down due to large-scale financial retrenchments in the University and specifically also in this Faculty. As dean, he was deeply involved in the widespread yet futile resistance within the University, and particularly in the Senate, against these retrenchments and this closure. Thereafter he was also involved in the negotiations of the curatorium of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) to move their training for the ministry to Stellenbosch, in order to assure that their future ministers would still receive a comprehensive theological education, including the study of the classical Greek and Hebrew languages.³³

He therefore never had the normal time and opportunity to develop a full-scale academic career. He could never conduct extensive postgraduate supervision, and only had two doctoral students who graduated at the UWC under his supervision and co-supervision). He could never publish

33 He served as editor of a special edition of *Koinonia*, the journal of the theological students of the URCSA at the UWC, in which the painful events leading to the move of the training from UWC to Stellenbosch were documented, put in historical perspective and discussed by several stakeholders, *Koinonia*, 12 February 2000.

any monographs, although he was considering a collection of essays on forgiveness at the time of his death. He hardly published extensive research in journals and never submitted a corpus of focused research for evaluation, an ideal that many South African researchers pursue.

Against this background, however, it is even more remarkable how well respected he was in both national and international theological circles. The many invitations to deliver speeches, from synods to inaugurations of university presidents to major public events, the many requests to contribute to conferences and consultations and to serve on commissions, the number of attempts to persuade him to accept strategic positions, the invitations to preach during prestigious events and to contribute to many edited volumes of essays, the scholarships offered to him and the impressive awards given to him, all attest to this respect which he enjoyed as theologian – in spite of the short spell of his scholarly career.

Over the years, he read plenary papers during the annual meetings of several scholarly societies, including those of Practical Theology, Missiology and Systematic Theology, but was also requested to read papers during many international and inter-disciplinary events – including for example the International Bonhoeffer Society.³⁴ He was invited to address synods and meetings of the United Evangelical Church in Germany, the South African Council of Churches, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (1997; 2004), the Reformed Church in America (2007), the Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (1999), the so-called Rustenburg III conference of South African church leaders (in 2001, in Cape Town), and regional (2003) as well as national (2004) synods of the Dutch Reformed Church, in addition to many ecumenical consultations, meetings and events.³⁵ Even when he was rector, he was still asked to write the entry on “African Theology” in the

34 For his own paper, ‘Who is “Jesus Christ as Community” for us today? The Quest for Community: A Challenge to Theology in South Africa’, *JTSA* (March 1997) 97:30–38; for his contribution during the closing session, ‘Afterword: Is Dietrich Bonhoeffer Still of any Use in South Africa’, in JW de Gruchy (ed), *Bonhoeffer for a New Day: Theology in a Time of Transition*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, 366–372.

35 Of all these, see only his address to the Reformed Church in America, 10 June 2007, in Pella, Iowa, ‘The Confession of Belhar and Our Common Future’ (available on websites).

authoritative *Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology*, one of his last academic contributions to theology.³⁶

In 1998, he was invited as resident Fellow of the Center of Theological Inquiry (CTI) in Princeton, New Jersey. In 1999 he was appointed as co-chair of the International Reformed and Roman Catholic Dialogue (from 1999–2003). He was also approached in 1999 to serve on an international research project of the World Council of Churches on social ethics and globalisation (from 2000–2002). In 2000 he was invited as Campbell Scholar to Columbia Theological Seminary in Atlanta, Georgia. From 2003–2004 he was part of a research project initiated by the CTI in Princeton on theological anthropology and, in January 2006, he was invited to co-present the famous Sprunt Lectures at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia.³⁷ During these years, he spoke on invitation at many universities worldwide and received and engaged many study delegations from universities at UWC and Stellenbosch.

In April 2013 he received the prestigious Abraham Kuyper Award for Excellence in Theology and Public Life, while he was the recipient of an honorary doctorate from Hope College in Holland, Michigan, in March 2014.³⁸ In July 2014, his wife Beryl Botman received on his behalf an honorary doctorate in law (posthumous) from the University of Aberdeen.³⁹

36 'African Theology', in McFarland IA, Fergusson DAS, Kilby K & Torrance IR (eds), *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, 5–8.

37 'Not Our Own: Comfort and Calling in Difficult Times', the Sprunt Lectures with DJ Smit, Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia, 23–25 January 2006 (unpublished). He gave the second and third lectures in the series of four lectures on "Living Unity" and "Real Reconciliation" respectively.

38 On 3 March 2014, he spoke in the Chapel of Hope College on "Living as if it were not". During the same afternoon, he gave a public speech on "Stellenbosch University's HOPE Project: A Vision for Academic Renewal". The next day the honorary doctorate was presented and he spoke on "Mandela's Children: Shaping a University".

39 The acceptance speech for the honorary degree from the University of Aberdeen, which Dr Beryl Botman delivered on his behalf on 8 July 2014, closed with the words "I want to challenge you to use your knowledge of the law to *become a champion of hope ... Use the law as an instrument of hope*. Defend human rights, including social and socio-economic rights. Become a thought leader for a better future, a thought leader for justice, a thought leader for dignity for all. It's the right thing to do."

During these short years he served as moderator of the Southern African Alliance of Reformed Churches (1990–1998) and served as president of the South African Council of Churches from 2003–2007. Although several of these positions were in church and public life, there is little doubt that he was elected for his theological competence and leadership and that he made theological contributions to and through those positions.

In short, what he achieved during those brief eight years was truly remarkable.

His life as a theologian, however, started long before those eight years and included his earlier years of study, ministry, church life and ecumenical involvement, and it continued after those eight years and included his later years as thought leader in academic and public life. Although he was no longer using theological rhetoric, he certainly still lived and worked according to his own theological logic.

Perhaps it was ultimately rooted in his pastoral concerns for those in need and particular for the youth, the next generation, in South Africa and later the global world of his experience, generations often filled with despair. In his theological studies, tradition and convictions he would find a logic of hope that involved confession and discipleship, that called for personal and social transformation and for complex forms of obedience when facing complex and difficult challenges.

In the South Africa of his experience and later the ecumenical and global world in which he increasingly moved, this confession and discipleship called for actions and initiatives of unity and peace, reconciliation and forgiveness, justice and human dignity – and he was often addressing the complexities of these issues in church and in public life, doing what is nowadays called public theology.

[R]evolutions, education and religion share a common destiny: They focus on the future of the youth, the next generation, and their natural demand for the future as a sphere to transform the public good ... The most crucial challenge for the future is to create a world that is better than the one we created in the twentieth century. The twenty-first century must see a better world; it must be a world of greater opportunities, a greener world, where wealth is shared, where we do not fight each other at every opportunity,

and it must be a world where we learn to deal with conflicts and disputes in ways other than litigation and warfare. The difficulty is that we are still very much the products of that century. A better, next generation will follow. However, the question remains whether we are able to begin to imagine what the world of the next generation could be like and what theological guidance they will have ... We should, therefore, ask ourselves how we may ensure that ... the next generation will be different and better than ours. This is indeed a difficult question. If we want to make sense of this challenge that faces us, we have to look anew at the notion of hope, which – for me – brings us closest to the future generation. To work with the notion of hope is to pick up the telescope and focus it on a better future, and imagine that it is here already and to work as though it is just around the corner. It is not yet here but once we have seen it, it becomes a generator of action.⁴⁰

Refusing to become a prisoner of the past, whether personal or social, Russel Botman always treasured and practised the gifts of imagination and creativity – seeing possibilities where many others in similar circumstances were still unable to see any way into a new future.

40 From one of his final theological contributions, 'Revolution, Education and Religion', in L Hansen, N Koopman & R Vosloo (eds), *Living Theology*, Wellington: Bible Media, 2011, 601–606.

Prof Russel Botman visits the University's "Saturday schools" in Mitchells Plain and Elsies River, 2012.
Photos: Hennie Rudman

4. HIS DIDACTICS

Mary-Anne Plaatjies-Van Huffel¹ and Anlené Taljaard²

INTRODUCTION

Prof Hayman Russel Botman³ (18 Oktober 1953 tot 28 Junie 2014) stood head and shoulders above his peers during four decades.⁴ As an academic, Botman effectively managed and coordinated the three core functions of universities: discovering and extending knowledge (research); facilitating quality teaching and effective opportunities for learning (teaching & learning); and building sustainable knowledge partnerships in and with the community (community interaction).⁵ Botman embraced the notion of engaged scholarship (the term “scholarship of engagement” is a concept coined by Ernest Boyer in 1996). Engaged scholarship is defined by the collaboration between academics and individuals outside the academy.⁶ Boyer used “scholarship” to indicate practices that cut across the categories of academic scholarship. He identified “engagement” to suggest a reciprocal, collaborative relationship with a public entity.⁷ As an engaged scholar Botman wanted to put the academic resources of the university to work

1 Professor in Ecclesiology and Church Polity, Stellenbosch University.

2 Lecturer in Systematic Theology and Ethics, University of the Free State.

3 BTh Licentiate (University of the Western Cape, 1981), ‘Investigation into a comprehensive pastoral practice’. Supervisor: Prof Gustav Bam; MTh cum laude (University of the Western Cape [UWC], 1984), ‘Jesus, nóg God, nóg mens? ’n Kritiese studie van die verbondmatige Christologie van Hendrikus Berkhof’ [Jesus, neither God, nor human. A critical study of the covenantal Christology of Hendrikus Berkhof]. Supervisor: Prof Dirkie J Smit; DTh (University of the Western Cape, 1994), ‘Discipleship as transformation? Towards a theology of transformation. A critical study of Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s theology’. Supervisor: Prof Dirkie J Smit.

4 Most of the information in this article is deduced from the Curriculum Vitae of Hayman Russel Botman.

5 Cf. Stellenbosch University Community Interaction Policy; Stellenbosch University (SU), *Strategiese Raamwerk vir die Eeuwisseling en Daarná* [Strategic Framework for the Turn of the Century and Beyond], 2000, www.sun.ac.za/university/stratplan/strat_afr.htm [Retrieved: 1 October 2015].

6 Boyer E, ‘The scholarship of engagement’, *Journal of Public Outreach* (1996) 1(1):11–20.

7 Barker D, ‘The Scholarship of Engagement: A Taxonomy of Five Emerging Practices’, *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* (2004) 9(2):123–137.

in solving pressing public problems of social exclusion of the poor from higher education and thereby contributing to the public good. Botman emphasised the importance of research, teaching and learning and community interaction and in so doing the social impact of research.⁸ Botman's premise was that research and teaching are mutually-reinforcing activities. According to Botman, the pedagogy of hope shaped Stellenbosch University's positioning as an engaged institution of higher learning committed to science for society.⁹ He therefore tirelessly accentuated public engagement. According to Botman, the Stellenbosch University wants to use its academic and research excellence to the benefit of society, to change policies in the country, to help create possibilities for people who otherwise would not have had them, and to think about a better kind of world than the current one.¹⁰

Botman sees the concept of pedagogy of hope as a possible leitmotif to guide the core activities of Stellenbosch University, i.e. learning and teaching, research and community interaction. For Botman, theological thought can never be separated from its embodiment in concrete ways in church and society. Freire's critical pedagogy has been a significant point of reference in Botman as engaged scholar.¹¹

8 Cf. Stellenbosch University Community Interaction Policy (1 October 2015).

9 Botman HR, 'The case for the relevant university', *SAJHE* (2011) 25(1):14–21, 12; Botman R, 'n *Multikulturele Universiteit met 'n Pedagogie van Hoop uit Afrika* [A Multicultural University with a Pedagogy of Hope for Africa], Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University, 2007, http://www.sun.ac.za/university/Management/rektor/docs/russeltoespraakfinaal_old.pdf [Retrieved: 1 October 2015]; Botman R, *Openbare bekendstelling van die Universiteit Stellenbosch se HOOP Projek*, Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University, 2010, http://www.sun.ac.za/university/Management/rektor/docs/HOOP_Projek.pdf [Retrieved: 1 October 2015]; SU, *Die HOOP Projek* [The HOPE Project]. Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University, 2010, www.diehoopprojek.co.za [Retrieved: 1 October 2015].

10 Botman HR, 2011, 'The case for the relevant university', 19.

11 Botman HR, 2011, 'The case for the relevant university', 14–21, 15.

TEACHING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE (1994–1999)

Shortly after obtaining his PhD from the University of the Western Cape (UWC)¹² in 1994, he was appointed as Senior Lecturer: Practical Theology at UWC, Faculty of Religion and Theology. Botman made important contributions to the renewal of research, teaching and learning, and community interaction at UWC. During the period 1999–2001, he was a visiting professor in the master's programme in Social Ethics, University of Port Elizabeth. As a teacher, Botman succeeded to not only excite the interest of the students in the modules he was teaching, but also to deepen the public aspects of academic expertise.¹³ Botman put the fostering of student-teacher relationship high on his agenda. He easily switched between teacher and scholar. As supervisor, Botman challenged his research students to be independent thinkers.¹⁴ He inspired and motivated students to ask critical questions, analyse and solve problems, and to think logically and creatively. Built on his understanding of Paulo Freire, Russel taught students to think critically.¹⁵ He conveyed tirelessly to each one of his research students the significance and value of research and that academic production cannot be made in isolation from social practices and public participation. For him there was an important connection between research, teaching and public interaction. In emphasising research-public-based teaching, he enabled many students to excel in the classroom as well as in their research. He encouraged

12 1994: Doctoral dissertation: 'Discipleship as transformation? Towards a theology of transformation'. University of the Western Cape (unpublished).

13 Cf. Barker D, 2004, 'The Scholarship of Engagement', 123.

14 The following students were supervised by Botman: Dirk Haarmann, 'From child maintenance grants to a new child support system: Building a policy for poverty alleviation with special reference to the financial, social and development impacts', UWC, 1998; Gordon Dames, 'Kategese in die Verenigde Gereformeerde Kerk: 'n Kritiese studie van internasionale kategetiese modelle', UWC, 1989; Lovemore Manaka, 'A study of the attitudes of the ecumenical movement and denomination regarding HIV/Aids with a specific reference to Harare, Zimbabwe, and Nelspruit, South Africa', UWC, 1998; Nathaniel Philander, 'Catechism as Faith Formation. The implication for the Catechism in URCSA', MTh, UWC, 2001; Mary-Anne Plaatjies, 'Is die Kerk Middel-euse? 'n Kritiese studie oor die geloofs- en kerklike praxis m.b.t. prostitusie in die NGK familie in die Kaapse-Skiereiland', MTh, UWC, 1998.

15 Botman R, 2007, *'n Multikulturele Universiteit met 'n Pedagogie van Hoop uit Afrika*; Botman R, 2010, *Openbare bekendstelling van die Universiteit Stellenbosch se HOOP Projek*.

his students to address public problems. The relationship between Botman and his students can be described as supportive.

Soon it became clear to everyone around him that Botman had a vision of greater things than mere teaching or supervising students. In 1996–1997, he was promoted to Departmental Chair: Department of Christianity and Society, and in 1999 he was to be promoted *ad hominem* to associate professor of Christianity and Society by the UWC. This serves as an indication of Botman’s standing and promise in his discipline. In the same year, the honour was bestowed on Botman, after only being in academia for five years, to be appointed as the dean of the Faculty of Religion and Theology of UWC. During the same year, the academic body at the UWC nominated him for the new position as transformation officer of the University in the office of the rector. He gracefully declined the position. As dean, he contributed majorly to the management and administration of activities of the Faculty of Religion and Theology of UWC. His responsibilities at UWC included, amongst others, the full transformation, rightsizing and institutional reorganisation of the faculty. He designed and organised a strategic plan for structural, staffing, academic and budgetary adjustment. He successfully planned, managed and restructured the Faculty of Religion and Theology, and also handled the budget of the Faculty and the Department of Christianity and Society. As dean, he made substantial managerial and administrative contributions to the Faculty’s functioning and development. He indeed provided excellent leadership in the areas of curriculum, instruction, assessment and planning as dean.

Botman showed initiative and skill in leading the Faculty of Religion and Theology of UWC in a difficult time of downsizing, retrenchments, restructuring of the UWC in 1998. As dean of the Faculty of Religion and Theology during 1998–1999, he played a pivotal role in moving the whole Faculty across to Stellenbosch University, home of the seminary of the Dutch Reformed Church. In doing so, Botman challenged the notion of the “irreconcilability” of people, pursuing “reconciliation” instead.¹⁶ At the end of 1999, the theological training of the URCSA students at UWC

16 Cf. Presidential Colloquium, Hope College 1, Holland, Michigan, United States, Tuesday, 4 March 2014, 4. Keynote address by Professor H Russel Botman.

was stopped. In the beginning of 2000, Botman brought 38 students from UWC and two staff members with him to Stellenbosch. This move had an impact on the ethos of the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University. Henceforth, the Faculty dealt with diversity, social exclusion and social inclusion.

During his tenure at UWC, Botman engaged effectively and independently with the creation of knowledge. He showed initiative and skill in the organisation, leadership and/or management of specific aspects of teaching and learning provision, staff and/or subject support, mentoring and advisory responsibilities. During these years Russel established his national and international standing in his discipline.

TEACHING AT STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY (2000–2014)

On 1 January 2000, he was appointed as professor of Missiology at Stellenbosch University's Faculty of Theology. At Stellenbosch, Botman further accentuated engaged scholarship. Amongst others he served as chairperson for the Missiology Department, dean alternate of the Faculty of Theology and as principal of the Theological School of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa and Stellenbosch University. In July 2002 he, aged 48, was elected as vice-rector (teaching) at Stellenbosch University. His appointment was seen as a recognition of his academic leadership and distinguished contribution to the academy.

From 2002 to 2007, he served as SU's Vice-Rector of Teaching; Chairperson: Employment Equity Forum: Humaniora, University level; Chairperson: Ecumenical, International Affairs and Communications Committee, Faculty; Convenor: Faculty's Research Planning Team for Theological-Ethical Studies on Poverty in South Africa; Member: Faculty Executive Committee, Senior Advisor: Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology; Directorship established the Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology; initiated the establishment of the Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology based at the Faculty of Theology of Stellenbosch University; Chief Advisor to the centre (2002–). He maintained ties with the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University and the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa.

He was installed Rector and Vice-Chancellor of Stellenbosch University (SU) in 2007, and reappointed for a second term by the University Council in 2012. His areas of responsibilities includes amongst others: Teaching and Learning portfolio; Student Accommodation; Student Affairs; Quality Assurance.

In his inauguration speech on 11 April 2007, Professor Hayman Russel Botman emphasised the notion of pedagogy of hope, a concept coined by Paulo Freire, the world-famous pedagogue who achieved fame by publishing his famous theory in a book entitled *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Russel Botman's main thesis was that the oppressed/poor/less privileged need pedagogy of hope. During his tenure, Botman became known for his innovative pedagogy. Botman had a strategic impact and influence beyond the SU as institution. According to Botman, to build a multicultural university with pedagogy of hope on the African continent requires the establishment of an Afrocentric approach to higher education.¹⁷ In his inaugural address the newly appointed Russel Botman as rector of Stellenbosch University incited hope in the marginalised of being provided with opportunities in post-apartheid South Africa. Botman, as Systematic Theologian, could have easily referred to Moltman in his inauguration speech. He, however, deliberately referred to Paulo Freire and thereby communicated to the world that he wants to deconstruct the embeddedness of exclusion/inclusion of the institution where he had been appointed. Maybe this is what Russel had done all his life: to deconstruct realities and construct alternative realities. According to Botman, the pedagogy of hope shaped Stellenbosch University's positioning as an engaged institution of higher learning, committed to science for society.¹⁸ Botman's premise was that through a science-for-society approach, universities can help to change the world for the better. According to Botman, the science-for-society approach was influenced by Paulo Freire's pedagogy of hope.¹⁹ This

17 Botman HR, 2007, 'n *Multikulturele Universiteit met 'n Pedagogie van Hoop uit Afrika*, 6.

18 Botman HR, 2011, 'The case for the relevant university'; Botman R, 2007, 'n *Multikulturele Universiteit met 'n Pedagogie van Hoop uit Afrika*; Botman R, 2010, *Openbare bekendstelling van die Universiteit Stellenbosch se HOOP Projek*; SU, 2010, *Die HOOP Projek*.

19 See Freire P, *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, London: Penguin, 1996 (1970); Freire P, *Pedagogy of hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the oppressed*, London: Continuum, 2004 (1992). Cf. Presidential Colloquium.

approach was, according to Botman, the driving force behind SU's HOPE Project, through which the staff and students of Stellenbosch University sought solutions to major societal challenges in South Africa and the rest of the continent. According to Botman, the Stellenbosch University wants to use its academic and research excellence to the benefit of society, to change policies in the country, to help create possibilities for people who otherwise would not have had them, and to think of a better kind of world than the current one.²⁰

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY, THE KNOWLEDGE PARTNER?²¹

Stellenbosch University describes itself as a knowledge partner.²² Prof Botman challenged the University to be a knowledge partner that produces *leaders of thought*, with the qualification that these thoughts should have the future of societies with its complexity in mind when engaging in research. In receiving his honorary doctoral degree posthumously from Aberdeen University, Scotland, he alluded to this particular challenge of the use of knowledge.

When I was first appointed rector and vice-chancellor in 2007, I inherited a first-rate institution – a tower of academic excellence and world-class research. But it was clear that there were pressing needs in society all around us – caused by poverty and sickness and oppression and violence and pollution.

We had to ask ourselves, what use would all our knowledge be if it did not make a difference to people's suffering?

So, I challenged Stellenbosch University to move 'from success to significance'. We had to become more relevant to society – especially its most vulnerable members.²³

20 Botman HR, 2011, 'The case for the relevant university', 19.

21 I, Anlené Taljaard, encountered Prof HR Botman during the years 2000–2014 and give an account of his use of knowledge experienced through his teaching and research contributions.

22 Research Policy of Stellenbosch University approved at the Senate of 15 August 2008. The logo of the University as a 'knowledge partner' was a result of a strategic session, 1999.

23 Graduation address of Prof Russel Botman, late rector and vice-chancellor of Stellenbosch University, for his Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws from the University of Aberdeen, Elphinstone Hall, Old Aberdeen, 8 July 2014, <http://hdl.handle.net/10019.2/4435>

This plea to move ‘from success to significance’ shows his particular *use of knowledge* through which he encouraged Stellenbosch University to critically engage with the issue of *relevance to the most vulnerable of society*.²⁴

PROF BOTMAN, THE KNOWLEDGE PARTNER WHO ASKS ‘WHAT KIND OF KNOWLEDGE, BY WHOM AND FOR WHOM?’

As an academic, Prof Botman integrated the University’s three focus areas of research, teaching and learning and community service in his research. He allowed people from the global research community, the student bodies and local communities to influence his perspective as a researcher. His work contains questions such as *what kind of knowledge, by whom and for whom*, where there is a constructive and creative relation between the various partners and the kind of knowledge gained and offered.

It is precisely in his holding of this constructive and creative relation between *knowledge* and *partners*, that his work opens the possibility to critically engage with the nature, quality and use of knowledge. In this sense, he allowed the partners to become the *interpretive community of knowledge* where there is a creative flow between the ever-growing body of knowledge informed by and through the dominant, established partners as well as the emerging and marginalised partners, inclusive of the silent and absent voices.²⁵

His research, albeit technical and theoretical, remains accessible and always had the well-being of the community and society in mind with the open invitation to students and colleagues to think together about their common future, inclusive of the most vulnerable members. This constructive and creative relation of knowledge as ‘*what kind of knowledge, by whom and for whom*’ is also seen in his invitation extended to the law graduates of Aberdeen, Scotland, to become these kinds of *thought leaders for a common future*.

24 Botman HR, Inaugural speech on the occasion of his installation, Stellenbosch University, 11 April 2007, <http://hdl.handle.net/10019.2/4436>

25 Botman HR, ‘Who is “Jesus Christ as Community” for us today? The Quest for Community: A Challenge to Theology in SA’, *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* (1997) 97:30–38.

Ladies and gentlemen, this brings me to my message to all the new graduates here today. I want to challenge you to use your knowledge of the law to become a champion of hope. At a time of increasing inequality and a widening wealth gap the world over, use the law as an instrument of hope. Defend human rights, including social and socio-economic rights. Become a thought leader for a better future, a thought leader for justice, a thought leader for dignity for all. It's the right thing to do.²⁶

PROF BOTMAN, THE KNOWLEDGE PARTNER WHO LOVED STUDENTS

It was through this significant use of knowledge that we first experienced Prof Botman as the newly appointed teacher of Missiology at Stellenbosch University during the years of 2000 and 2001. The master of Divinity class of 2000 formed the first integrated group of postgraduate students after the merging of the theological Faculties of the University of Western Cape and Stellenbosch University.²⁷

We were a class of about 35 students and at the beginning of that year, it was noticeable that how we clustered ourselves into our specific racial group when attending class. It was in this particular racially divided teaching and learning environment of Stellenbosch University that I experienced Prof Botman's theological knowledge that not only challenged my own perspectives but also opened up new and life-giving avenues from which theological reflection could be done. The kind of theological language that he spoke and taught was rooted in an academic discourse that creatively engaged with theory and praxis in a manner that was relevant, personal and challenging to us.²⁸

He brought a different lived reality to each lecture, as he was always well prepared and ready to engage with us as legitimate conversation partners in an academic discourse. He was a professor different from the Stellenbosch

26 Graduation address of Prof H Russel Botman, 8 July 2014.

27 Hartney JNM, 'Van teologiese skool vir die NGSK tot 'n teologiese skool van die VGK in SA aan die Teologiese Fakulteit van die US', in *Nederduits Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif* (2010) 51(1): 116–120.

28 Botman HR, 'The church partitioned or the church reconciled?: South Africa's theological and historical dilemma', in WE van Vugt & GD Cloete (eds), *Race and reconciliation in South Africa: A multicultural dialogue in comparative perspective*, Lanham: Lexington Books, 2000, 105–119.

theological intellectual context of that time and he transcended our small little worlds with ease but with grace and respect to us all.²⁹ In my encounters with him as a teacher and through his scholarly work, I have learned at least the following features of the kind of knowledge he engaged us in, namely that (1) *knowledge* has the ability to *function as a power* that unmasks, heals and transforms the self, communities and societies, and that (2) this powerful *knowledge is shaped in the proximity and presence of diverse communities* located in specific historical contexts which are subjected to constant change. He often argued that (3) *this knowledge is orientated towards the future* and that it is precisely this future-orientated knowledge that (4) *today forms the collective responsible response* that creates the *possibility and accessibility of hope for the generations to come*.

KNOWLEDGE FUNCTIONS AS TRANSFORMATIVE POWER FOR THE SELF, COMMUNITIES³⁰ AND SOCIETIES³¹

He gave us an assignment to reflect on the role of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC) in the transition period of the South African society with the qualification that the reflection must have a theological perspective.³² For many of the DRC students it was impossible to do the assignment and in our feedback session we told him that the TRC is a political body and that theology and the church should rather not evaluate the role and the work of the TRC. We argued that the TRC did not claim to be a Christian organisation with Christian goals and concluded that there is thus no ground on which we could theologically analyse and reflect upon the work of the TRC.

29 Botman HR, 'Belhar and the White Dutch Reformed Church: Changes in the DRC: 1974–1990', *Scriptura* (2001) 76, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7833/76-1-1180>

30 Botman HR, 'The Rights of the Individual, the Rights of the Community and Their Relationship', *Reformed World* (1998) 48(3):98–105.

31 Botman HR, 'Turning the tide of the city: An ecumenical vision of hope', *Nederduits Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif* (2004) 45(3&4):508–517.

32 Botman HR, 'Oor eenheid, geregtigheid en versoening by Jaap Durand', in EM Conradie (ed), *Discerning God's Justice In Church, Society And Academy: Festschrift For Jaap Durand*, Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 2009, 51–58.

He was not surprised by our reasoning as this was a similar and typical response of many white Afrikaner Christians during Apartheid when confronted with the political realities of Apartheid South Africa. His emphasis on the skill of theological reflection³³, forced us to think whether the goals and ideals of the TRC were in essence either life affirming or rather destructive to the whole of society. This line of thought opened a theological window never to be shut again, where all activities, formal or informal, whether in the cultural, intellectual, political, economic or social sphere, should be subjected to the questioning of various theological notions such as the reign of God,³⁴ the dignity of all human beings³⁵, justice³⁶ and a common future.³⁷

Together we read some of the hearings in the published report of the TRC and he pointed out that all these narratives were about real people and about death, suffering, fear, abuse, justice, forgiveness, restoration of relations and hope.³⁸ He asked us two questions: Why do we think that pastors should not say something about the well-being of human beings in society? And why do theological students think that they have nothing to contribute when notions such as Truth and Reconciliation is discussed outside the borders of the Church?

These critical questions unmasked us in many ways and pointed towards our participation in inhumane structures as well as our lack of true compassion for people who look different to ourselves and who live in

33 Durand J, 'Hoe my gedagtewêreld verander het: van ewige waarhede tot gekontekstualiseerde metafore', *Nederduits Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif* (2002) 43(1):64–70.

34 Botman HR, 'Hope as the coming reign of God' in W Brueggemann (ed), *Hope for the World. Mission in a Global Context: papers from the Campbell Seminar*, Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001, 69–81.

35 Botman HR, 'Covenantal anthropology: integrating three contemporary discourses of human dignity', in RK Soulen & L Woodhead (eds), *God and human dignity*, Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 2006, 72–86.

36 See Botman HR, 'Human dignity and economic globalisation', *Nederduits Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif* (2004) 45(2):317–327.

37 Botman H & Smit D, 'Exegesis and proclamation – 1 Corinthians 7:29–31: "To live ... as if it were not"', *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* (1988) 65:73–79.

38 Smit DJ, 'Reformed faith, justice and the struggle against apartheid', *Reformed World* (2005) 55(4): 355–368.

different communal realities.³⁹ In this single assignment we were confronted with the *power of knowledge* that functioned in a destructive manner both on a personal and structural level to form hostile, enclosed and inhumane communal life. The power of this destructive knowledge functioned as an ideology that misguided and misrepresented the suffering reality of many people.⁴⁰

He pointed out that Apartheid was about a specific kind of nation-building where theology functioned in the self-interest of a specific group and where we learned to see each other through racial lenses⁴¹ and that many policies, locally and globally, still continue to function in the interest of the already powerful. Although he was aware that many scholars remain skeptical of the use of knowledge as a transformative power in society and that nation-building can easily become a form of social engineering, he continued to plead for transformation⁴² in ourselves and the structures in which we live. He also called on us to subject these insights to a particular use of knowledge that keeps both the most vulnerable and the dignity of all in mind.⁴³

He understood, together with the German theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was an opponent of the Nazi-regime, that these crimes against humanities and gross human violations could easily continue to pacify, stifle and harm us and our communities. He thus asked a critical question to perpetrators and victims of the Apartheid past, also within the field of higher education:

We have been silent witnesses of evil deeds; we have been drenched by many storms; we have learnt the art of equivocation and pretence; experience has made us suspicious of others and kept us from being truthful and open;

39 Botman HR, 'Die bevryding van Kain? Etiese nadenke oor die dader in die versoeningsproses', *Scriptura* (1999) 69:111–124.

40 Cloete GD & Smit DJ (eds), *A Moment of Truth: The Confession of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: W B Eerdmans, 1984.

41 Botman HR, 'Who is "Jesus Christ as Community" for us today? The Quest for Community: A Challenge to Theology in SA', *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* (1997) 97:30–38.

42 Huber WB, 'The role of the church in situations of transition', *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* (1991) 74:14–20.

43 Botman HR, 'Ethics and Socio-Political Transformation: Towards a model for partnerships in the public arena', *Scriptura* (2000) 72:95–104.

intolerable conflicts have worn us down and even made us cynical. Are we still of any use?⁴⁴

In the South African society, Botman argued that this transformative power of knowledge should function towards the inclusion and dignity of all. Not only for the self and the just structures that we want to establish, but also for the healing of communal life, which, in the end, is the fibre of dignified lives.⁴⁵

PROF BOTMAN, THE KNOWLEDGE PARTNER OF STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY, WHO RESTS IN THE SHADE OF PAPEGAAIBERG, STELLENBOSCH

Now the body of this beloved teacher rests at the foot of the Papegaaiberg, Stellenbosch. His request to be buried here, in the heart of Stellenbosch, as the former rector of the University, signals to me, part of the hope that he embodies for future generations in this specific space and time in the South African history.

He has left the intellectual Stellenbosch community for the next generation of leaders of thought. He has, however, left behind an intellectual space and communal life that have been touched with his knowledge and his life. His critical questions of *what kind of knowledge, by whom and for whom* can never be undone. It now belongs to the body of knowledge of Stellenbosch University.

And perhaps true to his teaching style, he left us as *thought leaders* with the open-ended question: “*what use would all our knowledge be if it did not make a difference to people’s suffering?*” to be answered by this generation of academics for the hope of the next generation of born-frees⁴⁶ and global citizens.

The biblical inscription on his gravestone accounts for the work of reconciliation⁴⁷ and it reminds me of the conversations he facilitated between various

44 Bonhoeffer D, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, New York:Macmillan, 1971, 16–17.

45 Botman HR, ‘Who is “Jesus Christ as Community” for us today? The Quest for Community: A Challenge to Theology in SA’, *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* (1997) 97:30–38.

46 Children born in South Africa after 1994 is often referred to as the born-frees.

47 2 Corinthians 4:17–18.

communities and people, as legitimate knowledge partners. Personally, he strived, through collective research, to include the many voices in order to realise a common, humane future.

He rests in Stellenbosch as a *reconciling* person, testifying to future generations that his voice as an internationally recognised academic and as the first black rector of the University belongs to the collective body of Stellenbosch knowledge partners.

His body rests in the shade of Papegaaiberg and it reminds us that the *Stellenbosch space has been altered* and that he belongs to the body of knowledge as the academic partner that strived for excellence, relevance and significance.

CONCLUSION

Hope is the leitmotif in Botman's academic endeavours. Botman saw teaching as a commitment to broaden the focus of civic engagement in higher education beyond teaching. In conclusion, let us quote some words from the late Russel Botman: "I wish to see churches, leaders and laypersons, covenanting for justice in the face of economic globalisation. Consequently, students who leave this institution will enter their ministries with a vision to lead this crucial mission of God in the world. They will be prepared to enter into critical and constructive dialogue with political, community and business leaders. These students will be able to engage them with knowledge of secular analyses and theories, but their language will be unashamedly Christian in grammar and in content."⁴⁸ Indeed, Prof Hayman Russel Botman emerged during the four decades as an engaged scholar *par excellence*.

48 Botman HR, 'The end of hope or new horizon of hope? An outreach to those in Africa who dare hope', *Nederduits Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif* (2002) 43(1&2):22–31.

In top management.
Photo: Anton Jordaan

5. AS VICE-RECTOR (TEACHING)

1 JULY 2002 - 31 DECEMBER 2006

A MAN WITH A SOFT HEART ...

*Ludolph Botha*¹

The first time I heard Prof Russel Botman speak, was during the Senate meeting on 7 June 2002 during which the shortlisted candidates for vice-rector (Teaching) had to present their perspectives on the positions they applied for. For many members of the Senate, this theologian from the University of the Western Cape (UWC) was still relatively unknown – as were some of the other colleagues who had moved over from UWC on 1 January 2000 to assume duty at our Faculty of Theology.

Our first encounter with Prof Botman in the Senate left my colleagues and me carefully optimistic. Here was someone who came across as friendly and amicable, who was a good speaker and who clearly and expressly spelled out his vision for the new position. His vision for the future of the University, as contained in the Council documents of July 2002, was as follows: “I see that *Stellenbosch University will be identified as knowledge partner for all people* and praised for its accessibility, learning support, retention and successful delivery of quality graduates who *are personally committed to life-long learning*.” During question time, I specifically asked about his view on academic development programmes. At that stage, the University really struggled to recruit more black, coloured and Indian students, and to effectively assist those who had enrolled and needed academic support. The whole language debate was under discussion and was inevitably a factor in the recruitment of students from previously educationally disadvantaged circumstances. Prof Botman’s answers to my questions excited me. Here was most definitely a person who not only understood the theme very well, but had also experienced being educationally disadvantaged and who had a soft spot for students who had sacrificed a lot under difficult circumstances

1 Dr Ludolph Botha was Senior Director: Student and Academic Support, Stellenbosch University.

in order to study, in particular. When providing his vision at the Senate on 7 June 2002, he also emphasised matters such as *accessibility for students from the designated communities, a hospitable institutional culture, better support of academic development, the success with which we retain students and improve the through-put rate*. He also touchingly concluded his vision with the following words: “More people from historically disadvantaged communities should share in this experience and enter into a successful knowledge partnership with Stellenbosch University”.

When Prof Botman was appointed as vice-rector (Teaching) on 1 July 2002, many of my colleagues and I envisioned realising the University’s objective – to, with the assistance of this “new” vice-rector, provide *access* to as many students as possible and gradually reach out to significantly more educationally disadvantaged students. This “soft heart” for those students coming from difficult circumstances continually remained a part of Prof Botman’s vision for the learning and teaching portfolio. And thereafter, when he became rector and vice-chancellor, he focused even more on making the University accessible to everyone who had the potential. His dream, which he repeated numerous times, was that the farmworker’s daughter and the farmer’s son should be able to gain access to the University with equal ease. At one stage, to his great joy, this dream (and many others!) came true when two children from the same farm gained access to the University – the one a farmworker’s child and the other the farmer’s child. Wonderful news, and it later came to light, to cap it all, that the two also had a romantic relationship! Recruitment of students, and especially previously disadvantaged students, was a matter that Prof Botman supported with heart and soul. He went to all lengths to talk to headmasters, parents and potential students to convince them that Stellenbosch wanted to be an academic home for them. He especially targeted schools and communities that did not previously consider Stellenbosch University as their “academic home”.

The Language Centre was also established at the start of Prof Botman’s term as vice-rector (Teaching). Establishing this centre and providing in the language needs of all our students in a proper and scientific way had been dreamed about for a long time. It was also an issue, and at that stage a controversial issue, that was related to the diversification of our student

community. The first attempts to support students with specific language needs (especially in cases where the language of instruction was not the students' mother tongue) with proper complementary modules and interventions in order for them to achieve academic success, originated in the context of academic development programmes. Those first language initiatives were, unfortunately, uncoordinated and spread across faculties and support service divisions at the University. However, it, became clear that there was a dire need for one central centre, especially in our multilingual South African context, that could coordinate this important work across the institution and address the needs in a systemic way. It was therefore no surprise that Prof Botman enthusiastically endeavoured to establish this centre properly to provide effective language support to all our students, but especially also to those who were previously disadvantaged and who had to receive their tuition in a second or even a third language.

The establishment of the Language Centre went hand in hand with the needs to thoroughly investigate all the language needs at our University and from there to create a meaningful language policy for an even more diverse and multilingual student community. In this regard, Prof Botman, with the Language Centre's support, played an important role and also entered into an intense language debate (luckily not as bad as the rector and vice-chancellor of that term, Prof Chris Brink!). It was a tuition matter that Prof Botman handled with great discernment precisely because he could never be accused of any bias. For him it was all about equal rights for all our students and greater access for young people from previously disadvantaged contexts. The essence of the language debate at that stage was in fact about accommodating students who were not proficient in Afrikaans. Some argued that not enough was being done to assist these students to succeed in their studies and that they were set up for failure because it was, and still is, not feasible to acquire an additional language (in this case Afrikaans) in such a short period of time in order to achieve academic success. Others, again, argued that the "accommodation" of these students means that Afrikaans is replaced by English, which would lead to the end of Afrikaans as language of instruction at Stellenbosch University. They furthermore argued that those students who prefer English as the language of instruction should apply to and enrol at universities where English is the only language of instruction.

Prof Leon de Stadler, the founder-director of the Language Centre who worked closely with Prof Botman, wrote the following about him:

It was my privilege to get to know Prof Botman on a professional and a more personal level. Seen from a professional perspective, Prof Botman played a very important role in my years as founder-director of the Language Centre (2001/2002 and later) and in a period when the University had to seriously reconsider its language policy. Besides the institutional support that he helped to bring about, it was also a special source of support that he also wrestled with me on the level of encouragement and reassurance in his own truly human way. Especially in the inception years of the Language Centre when we also had to grapple with growing needs and limited human and other resources, his level-headed management style was a source of great calm and inspiration.

What was interesting about both his time as vice-rector and thereafter as rector, was that he was less involved in the processes of language policy development and revision. In his period as vice-rector the language policy formation process was driven specifically by the rector, Prof Chris Brink. The latter was the person who issued the brief and he also managed the processes, with Prof Botman playing a more supportive role in the background. When Prof Botman was appointed rector it was also clear that he would take a clear stand on the University as a multilingual institution, but that he wouldn't be directly involved in the language policy revision and management processes. I sometimes had the impression that he wouldn't allow the language issues of the University from distracting him from what clearly was important to him: his HOPE Project.

On a more personal level I was always under the impression of Prof Botman's humaneness and his ability to convey this in his management practice and style. However, he often found himself in positions where he had to steer the University through troublesome times while also enduring criticism – also in terms of language issues – I always had the impression that he could remain calm and always let that special humanness-trademark triumph. For some or other reason he always associated me with (language) problems and he was always ready to make good-natured fun of me. In that way he reminded me that there might be other, truly important things in life and that a person has to stay level-headed and humble. I will always remember his unique sense of humour and his ability to see humanity in its often imperfect state, and then to have compassion for it. I could always keep on learning from him and therefore his death was also a painful personal loss here in the last phase of my career.

A further milestone that was reached in Prof Botman's term as vice-rector (Teaching) and that he should get a lot of credit for, was the establishment of the First-year Academy. It is also a matter which directly relates to *access with success*. His argument was that if more students were to be recruited from previously disadvantaged communities, if financial provision was made for many of them with recruitment bursaries and if support was provided for their language needs, then the big challenge of continued successful study still remains. Unfortunately, in the 2004–2005 period some of the newcomer first-years (especially those from black, coloured and Indian ranks) did not manage to successfully continue with their studies, despite the many initiatives which included extended degree programmes, tutor assistance and other forms of support, didn't successfully continue with their studies after their first year. In comparison to the other mainstream students, significantly more black, coloured and Indian students left the University after one year: In 2004 the retention rate for these students was 75,17% in comparison to the rest who had a retention rate of 87,23%, and in 2005 it was 74,95% compared to the 87,4% of the rest. In other words, the retention and success rates of our first-years, and especially students from previously disadvantaged circumstances, could be better, and the University searched for a creative way to better support our first-year students.

At that stage, the University was often represented at the *International First-year Experience* conferences where the focus specifically falls on first-years and mechanisms to improve their success rates. At one of these international conferences, contact was made with Prof Betty Siegel, who at the time was President (Rector in our terms) of Kennesaw State University in the state of Georgia in the USA. At that stage she was a prominent leader in higher education in the USA and, together with Prof John Gardner, one of the advocates of the whole *first-year experience* movement in the USA. After Prof Siegel's retirement after 25 years as President of her university in 2005 (by the way, at that stage she was the longest serving female President ever at a university in the USA), she led a study tour for a group of university presidents from the USA to South Africa and, among others, also visited Stellenbosch University. Under Prof Botman's leadership, the group of presidents were received in the Council Chamber where matters of communal interest were discussed. One of the issues that was

under discussion was our University's need to do better with regard to our newcomer first-year students' academic success. At that stage there were already plans to bring about something similar to the *first-year experience* (which Prof Botman creatively called the *First-year Academy*, with reference to our own Military Academy). The First-year Academy was therefore a planned initiative that had to place the focus on all facets of newcomer first-years' university experiences which would hopefully lead to greater academic success.

Prof Siegel was clearly very impressed with the idea of a First-year Academy and offered to do everything in her power to help us with the establishment of such an initiative at our University. On the spur of the moment, Prof Botman asked Prof Siegel what her plans were for after her retirement (which was September 2005). When she indicated that she did not have any set plans, he invited her to spend some time on our campus during the next year (2006) with the sole purpose of providing us with advice with regard to the establishment of the First-year Academy.

This was the start of a special collegial association and friendship between Profs Botman and Siegel – a friendship that would last until Prof Botman's passing. The First-year Academy was officially launched in 2006. Prof Siegel and her husband, a retired judge, spent two months in 2006 on our campus during which time excellent advice and support was received from Prof Siegel. The First-year Academy can therefore rightly be seen as one of Prof Botman's special legacies as vice-rector (Teaching). Although it is extremely difficult to sufficiently determine the impact of any intervention with so many variables, it is still interesting to see how the first-years' retention rate (after a decline in 2004–2005) have since 2006 constantly remained between 86% and 88% (at the writing of this it was 87%).

Through Prof Betty Siegel, Prof Botman made contact with Prof John Knapp, currently President (Rector) of Hope College, Michigan, in the USA. Prof Knapp is an expert in the field of ethical leadership and he was the co-host (along with Profs Siegel and Botman) of a conference on ethical leadership in the higher education sector which took place at Stellenbosch in April 2008. The conference, which was known as the *Stellenbosch Seboka: Deliberations on Higher Education and Ethical Leadership*, involved rectors

of especially Southern African universities, as well as a few prominent leaders in the field of higher education from the USA. From this association with Prof Knapp arose staff and student outreach opportunities aimed at leadership development. Following on the HOPE Project and the other connections which stretched over a number of years, an honorary doctoral degree was awarded to Prof Botman by Hope College in March 2014.

In the out-of-class-context, the first Listen, Live and Learn houses (LLL houses) and the cluster concept also started to take shape during Prof Botman's term as vice-rector. The LLL-house concept arose from the University's custom to purchase old houses, located close to the campus, and to place mostly senior students or student leaders in them. Initially, only seven houses were experimented with and a diverse group of students (diverse in all respects, namely race, gender, language, religion, field of study, etc.) was placed in them. Furthermore, a theme (such as media, sustainability or technology) and an academic supervisor (senior academic) are allocated to each house and a programme is followed according to which meals are regularly (weekly) eaten together and speakers (experts) provide input and participate in the conversation. In the house, each student delivers a contribution from his/her perspective, field of study, background and personality. One such student writes from Australia: "I spent six years on campus and in my last year of my master's degree in a LLL-house. During the year in the LLL-house, I learned more than during all the other years put together." Currently, there are 28 such houses and they comprise an important part of the senior student accommodation.

In addition to the above-mentioned out-of-class initiative, Prof Botman was continually concerned about the Private Student Organisation or PSO students (day students) of whom many commutes. The cluster concept is the establishment of a larger community (like a type of village) in which two to four residences and two to three PSO wards are grouped together as a cluster. In the cluster, a facility (hub) for private students is built close to the residences and in that facility there are rooms and offices for the house committee members of the PSO wards, as well as rooms in which to study, relax and take a break, and a cafeteria or deli that provides food. The PSO students in such a cluster can eat in the dining halls of the residences in a particular cluster, and all other rooms, such as lounges and break rooms,

are shared by all members of a cluster. In this way, a place (home or neighbourhood) is offered to PSO students (or day students) where they can join in, participate in sport, be divided into mentoring groups, etc. In short, with the cluster or *Collegiate* idea, the University managed to integrate the PSO with the residence students for the first time in our University's history. The aim was to offer PSO students (who were academically weaker than comparable residence students) a university experience that was very similar to that of residence students. Currently, there are seven clusters (including the one on Tygerberg Campus) and the positive results of this special initiative are already evident. Both the LLL-house and -cluster concepts were developed by Mr Pieter Kloppers, current director of the Centre for Student Structures and Communities, but the way in which Prof Botman immediately supported and became involved with this initiative was a clear sign that he understood the important role of community development in supporting our students. In these small (LLL-houses) and large (clusters) communities, diverse groups can learn to really *listen* to one another, *learn* from one another and *live* together in harmony.

In this regard, the cluster concept was a way to better support the PSO students and give them a university experience closer to that of a student in a residence – naturally with the ultimate purpose to improve academic success. The clusters and hubs should therefore, except for other places on campus like the Neelsie and faculty buildings, provide students with a place where they can relax, socialise, study, eat (also in residence dining-rooms) and do group work. These developments, launched during Prof Botman's time as vice-rector and gradually extended during his term as rector, are not only recognised nationally, but internationally this approach is seen as very creative and suitable to our South African context, with many visitors seeking information on this subject.

Prof Botman's full support of a value-driven approach in the residential and out-of-class context, contrary to a hierarchical approach to power (which often leads to unacceptable welcoming practices), was undeniable. Not only did he support this initiative, but his whole attitude towards it and interaction with students (and staff) testified of *friendliness*, *hospitality* and *human dignity* – the essential characteristics of a value-driven management approach. The fact that the new senior residence on the Stellenbosch campus

was named after Prof Botman, is therefore especially apt and symbolises his striving which was already clear when he was vice-rector, namely to provide all our students a home where they are received in a friendly and hospitable way, treated with human dignity and where they can flourish.

Another milestone that was reached during the time when Prof Botman was vice-rector (Teaching) was the establishment of an Office for Students with Special Learning Needs (Disabilities) in the Centre for Student Counselling and Development (CSCD) (since then the name of the Office was changed to *Disability Unit*). The way in which the University made provision for students with special learning needs up to that stage was a source of concern. It often took place on an ad hoc basis and different services and responsibilities were spread throughout the campus. Although there was a forum for concerned parties as well as a student society, there wasn't a central point from where support was provided for these students in an effective, coordinated and scientifically responsible way. With the establishment of the Office in the Centre for Student Counselling and Development, a service was also started for this special group of students which served as an example of how such a service is supposed to work at a university in South Africa. Without Prof Botman's vision, support and especially his ability to persuade, this special facility, as a unit with sufficient staff, would not have been a part of our University's range of services for diverse student groups as is currently the case. Here he also showed his heart for those with special needs and went out of his way to enhance their chances of achieving success at the University.

A matter that also challenged the vice-rector (Teaching) was the transfer of the Stellenbosch University's School for Oral Medicine to the University of the Western Cape's Dentistry Faculty during 2003. One of the stumbling blocks that had to be overcome at the start of the process was for the two universities to agree on whether the process will be handled as a *transfer* or a *merger*. The way this would be handled would hold implications for the staff and the use and ownership of the Dentistry building and facilities. Some of the representatives of SU argued for a merger – it was a heavy and unthinkable blow for them to fully give up on Dentistry. The Minister's instruction, however, was clear: Stellenbosch could no longer present Dentistry, all training in this profession would in future take place only

at UWC. UWC welcomed the ministerial decision and wanted to carry it out as soon as possible. Prof Botman's words that solved the problem and facilitated the process was to suggest that the two universities' task group be called the JMITT, the *Joint Merger and Incorporation Task Team*. The way in which Prof Botman could identify the problem and find the solution ensured agreement. Under the flag of the JMITT the complicated and sensitive process was seen through. In that way, the initial stalemate was laid to rest and a final result, acceptable to all parties, was produced. This particular talent of Prof Botman to see the heart of the problem and find a solution, came to the fore time and again during his term as vice-rector and also thereafter as rector and vice-chancellor.

It was a privilege to have had a line head who could lead with a soft hand (heart), provide firm leadership and at the same time not interfere with detail. It sent a very important signal, namely that he trusted us and never questioned our professionalism. He was a manager that you wanted to give your best to and whose intentions were never doubted. He definitely had an empowering influence on those persons who worked with him. To us who reported to him it soon became clear that he had exceptional visionary abilities – as well as the ability to see the bigger picture at a time when none of us could. That extraordinary talent to provide visionary leadership caused the learning and teaching portfolio to flourish and contributed to the many creative and necessary initiatives that came into being (for example the establishment of the First-year Academy and a new approach to recruitment and admissions). It is clear that Prof Botman's term as vice-rector (Teaching) thoroughly prepared him for the role as rector and vice-chancellor that followed. The way in which he established himself as academic leader and manager, instilled trust in his colleagues and the students. Once again it was the man, Russel Botman, who always made time, was always concerned about everyone's well-being, always wanted to say thank you when the work was done well and always wanted to do more for our students, and especially disadvantaged students, which made him an excellent candidate for the rector's position.

At the end of a holiday it was not unheard of to see Prof Botman walking on campus while greeting staff (all staff) and students, exchanging chitchat, asking how it was going and wishing them all a good new term. His door

was always open for his colleagues and he had the same open-door approach towards his students. A student leader who worked for a few years with Prof Botman as vice-rector (Teaching), was Lourens du Plessis (SRC secretary and chairperson to the Academic Affairs Council 2003/2004 and SRC chairperson 2004/2005). Lourens describes his experience of Prof Botman as follows:

Few people who were involved with Student Affairs at Stellenbosch in 2002–2006 will probably differ from me when I say that it was a time of great change. The winds of change definitely reached Stellenbosch and Prof Botman was part of the team that had the task to manage it all.

It was a time with a new rector focused on bringing much-needed changes to the Stellenbosch culture at an accelerated speed – changes that also caused shock waves. The language debate was intense and Prof Botman had to brave its harshness on a day-to-day level; from students, staff and other interest groups. Each had their fixed agendas, and then there also was the media who could be seen more as an interest group than an independent observer and commentator. On a practical level the Student Affairs Division at that stage had a Dean of Students as head who reported to the vice-rector (Teaching) and no longer, as in the past, directly to the rector. This caused great unhappiness among student leaders because it looked as if Student Affairs now got a lower priority as just another one of the vast responsibilities of the vice-rector (Teaching). Prof Botman had to manage the issue and he saved this difficult situation with dignity and calm.

There are a few examples of big challenges that landed on Prof Botman's table and that directly affected us as student leaders. There were, however, also many other challenges like the emotional closing of Stellenbosch University's School of Dentistry, the high demands made upon him with regard to his responsibility for space, Academic Support, the Centre for Student Counselling and Development and the Registrar's Division.

On a more fundamental level the student community began to develop an idea of the necessity of critically evaluating "traditions". Residences in particular, which in many respects lie at the heart of the Stellenbosch student culture, had to (and in many cases, wanted to) change to a value-driven culture. Here Prof Botman had great empathy with people who honestly struggled with a reality that they weren't necessarily prepared for, and especially for the fine balance that we as (imperfect) student leaders had to uphold to bring about a change of heart rather than a change of format. In this regard he was never preachy, prescriptive or condescending.

And, this all took place in a university context where neither students nor staff liked to accept instructions or even guidance. Thus, it was a blessing that Prof Botman was responsible for these matters. He was a peacemaker, somebody with the ability to engage with academics and students, rectors and workers meaningfully and warmly. People trusted him easily, because his interest in them as people originated from a sincere love for them. He always thought up strategies to achieve the best for the people he was responsible for. But his moral compass never went off course as a result of this. And, unlike a lot of other people that the student leaders had to cooperate with, he (who himself was an ex-student leader) always had an ear and advice for us – to him, students were his partners, not bothersome interruptions. His house was also open to students – I remember how he very enthusiastically invited the SRC for “potjiekos” and didn’t hesitate to serve good wine to a few aspirant wine connoisseurs!

A lot was entrusted to him, a lot was expected of him and he gave a lot. It is a pity that he was called home so soon – but the lives of students that crossed his threshold, were infinitely enriched by the honour to have been able to work with him and learn from him. He didn’t labour in vain.

Stellenbosch University really was very honoured and blessed to have had Russel Hayman Botman at a time when we needed such a special type of leader as vice-rector (Teaching) – and later as rector and vice-chancellor. We miss him, we honour his memory and we readily acknowledge his special legacy which had such a significant and positive impact on so many lives – a man with a soft heart!

(With thankful acknowledgement to all the colleagues and ex-students who helped with this chapter.)

Inauguration, 2007.

Photo: SCPS

6. AS MANAGER

Paul Cluver¹ and Gerhard Lubbe²

INTRODUCTION

Any assessment of the performance of a head of a South African university presupposes some understanding of the institutional constraints on the activities of such a role-player. To this end, this contribution will in the first instance sketch the organisational framework within which a rector of a tertiary institution has to perform his or her role. Reference will thereafter be made to some general and often contradictory characteristics of universities, which those attempting to determine its course have to contend with, as well as circumstances particular to Stellenbosch University and the era during which Russel Botman stood at its helm. This provides a backdrop for an assessment of how Russel Botman as rector and vice-chancellor sought to chart a course through the often conflicting cross currents affecting the University during his tenure.

Universities, it will be seen, are *sui generis* and complex social institutions and their multi-dimensionality poses formidable challenges to those that seek to run them. The contributors in their respective capacities as a former chairman of the University Council and a former dean and sometime member of Rector's Management Team, enjoyed exposure to the late rector and his management abilities and style in respect of only some of these aspects. We can only speak of what we experienced and are personally aware of. The focus will primarily be on Botman's response to the broader challenges of the rectoral office and less on the merely bureaucratic and administrative aspects of his management performance and style. The essay also does not purport to provide a comprehensive historical account of all aspects of the University's affairs under Botman's tenure.

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THE CHALLENGES OF UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

The Institutional context

According to the Higher Education Act, 101 of 1997, the academic activities of higher education institutions comprise the teaching and learning and examination of students and research (Section 32(2)(b), read with Section 28(1) – interestingly, the act makes no explicit reference to community interaction). These activities do not occur in a vacuum, but presuppose not only organised academic structures such as faculties and departments but also complex support structures such as information technology networks and systems, libraries, student support systems, laboratories and workshops. All of these facets of a university's business have to be housed in and served by appropriate physical infrastructures and be managed in a financially sustainable way.

The complexity of this business and the need for day-to-day management of its affairs find expression in a statutory framework characterised by an intricate and nuanced division of functions and responsibilities between certain prescribed institutional structures, namely the University Council, its Senate and management structures. Overall control of a university, bearing with it the final say regarding both the academic and operational aspects of a university's business, is vested in its Council (Articles 1 and 27(1) of the Act, par 11(1) of the University Statute). The provision that the head of a higher education institution is by virtue of Article 30 of the Act, with the support of his or her management team, responsible for the management and administration of all aspects of its activities (cf. Statute par 4(4)), establishes a division between the control and management functions. The position in respect of control functions is complicated by the fact that the University's Senate is, by virtue of Section 28 of the Act, responsible to Council for teaching and research activities. The management's day-to-day administration of these academic activities is accordingly also subject to overview and control by Senate. In this sense, the Senate shares control of the institution with Council, subject, however, to the latter's overall responsibility.

The complexity of the institution is reflected in its management processes. In so far as the academic functions of teaching and learning and research is

concerned, management has to contend with grey areas related to the distinct, but shared and interrelated, functions of Council and Senate. The Council's power to control the institution is defined in very general terms in the act and the institutional statute. This leaves uncertain the extent to which Council may legitimately impinge not only on managerial prerogatives but also the academic autonomy of faculties, departments and individual academics. The composition of Council is a further source of difficulty and challenge for a rector. These are usually large bodies: the Stellenbosch Council consists of the statutory maximum number of thirty members, at least 60% of which are nominated by a variety of stakeholder and interest groups independent of the university community. The underlying idea is that the different perspectives so obtained will facilitate decision-making in the best interests of the institution. This aspect is often not properly understood, however. Members drawn from the various interest groups represented on Council may see themselves as mandated to advance the interests of their nominating constituencies rather than taking a disinterested view of what the interests of the institution require. The relationships between rector and management and academic units, i.e. deans, faculties and departments on the other hand, are in themselves often complicated by divergent understandings of the ideal of academic freedom and the collegial culture traditionally associated with universities. The rector is the CEO of the institution, but is required to manage it without the direct and hierarchical relationships of authority typically enjoyed by his or her counterparts in business.

The extent of the challenges posed by this institutional structure is in the case of Stellenbosch University exacerbated by the size of the institution. In 2014, 29 393 students were enrolled in the University on the annual official university census date. This large and diverse student body was served by 990 full time faculty members operating in ten faculties spread out over three campuses and a non-academic support staff of 2 113. The value of the institution's assets amounted to R12 000 203 000 in 2014 and the total annual income for 2014 was R5 391 000 000 (SU Annual Report 2014:93, 94).

Cross currents affecting the strategic management of tertiary institutions

Upon assuming office in 2007, Russel Botman was exposed to challenges very different from those faced by his predecessors. Major concerns for his administration were the implications of the potential of technology for tertiary institutions in the twenty-first century as well as the demands of running a university in a globalised and highly competitive international context in the face of severe domestic funding constraints. The South African context was also marked by issues that were qualitatively different and several orders of magnitude more challenging than before. Whereas thirty years ago the transition between schools serving the white population and the world of the university proceeded more or less seamlessly, universities have since the advent of a democratic order been faced not only with the negative consequences of a dysfunctional school system for student success at tertiary level but also the transformational imperatives regarding student and staff diversity emanating from the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of 1996.

Universities are in any event dynamic institutions, subject to tensions between what have been called “*erflikheidselemente*”, i.e. characteristics of the classical idea of the university as an institution of higher learning and countervailing visions of their role and function derived from their contemporary environment and circumstances (HW Rossouw, *Universiteit, Wetenskap en Kultuur*, 1993:32). Rossouw delineates various force fields (*kragvelde*) that arise from tensions existing between considerations of:

- Identity and relevance;
- Universality and particularity;
- Elitism and egalitarianism;
- Autonomy and constraint (*beperking*); and
- Community and corporativism.

These pairings should not be regarded as binary opposite or mutually exclusive considerations, but rather as inescapable characteristics of tertiary institutions which, because of their polarising tendencies, tend to some extent to push the institution in opposing directions. Amongst the

preconditions for success as rector would seem to be an understanding of the complexity of the institution and the opposing forces acting on its functioning and the ability to achieve an optimal balance between these.

Russel Botman the man

The management style of an incumbent rector will reflect not only the professional training but also the personal traits of the individual concerned. The former rector was clearly someone of considerable ambition with the need and the drive to make a significant difference in his sphere of influence. Yet, the trappings of his office never obscured Russel Botman's caring personality and warm humanity, which brought with it an inclination to take the part of the underdog in decision regarding university processes. Throughout his period in office he displayed a genuine empathy for those manning and attending the institution that went beyond the merely formal concerns to be expected of the holder of a high managerial office.

Although Russel Botman was a deeply religious individual, he was not of a fundamentalist persuasion, but rather of a reconciliatory bent, able to go beyond binary opposites and to reconcile opposing views. While – dare one say it – the tendency of theologians towards verbosity and to preach rather than to listen was not wholly absent from his make-up, he impressed with the ability to assess the complexity of situations instantly and a gift for visionary leadership to take the institution forward. It is perhaps a natural tendency for academics who move to high management positions without training or experience in management to act according to their personal inclinations and professional orientation. In this regard, Russel Botman's style of leadership was perhaps also highly personal and characterised by a concern to bring management closer to the academic community. The process of “management by walking around” was an integral component of his management approach and saw the rector's management team convening in the various faculties on a regular basis with a view to facilitation interaction between central management team and those of the faculties. Nonetheless, while professing to a consultative management philosophy, his tenure was at times marked by a tendency to “go it alone” and leave the team behind.

NAVIGATING THE COUNTERVAILING CURRENTS

A feature of Russel Botman's tenure as rector was a pre-occupation with the development of comprehensive plans to chart the course of the institution. After his installation in 2007, Botman orientated himself and the institution with reference to the guide-lines and commitment in the University's *Strategic Framework for the Turn of the Century and Beyond* (2000) and utilised the framework notion of a Pedagogy of Hope to attempt a fundamental repositioning of the institution by means of the ambitious HOPE Project (cf. SU Annual Report 2007:7; SU Annual Report 2010:6). As a final legacy of Botman's tenure, the University's new Vision 2030, informed by the values enshrined in the Constitution and the National Development Plan (NDP), finds expression in the *University's Institutional Intent and Strategy 2013–2018* (IIS) of 2013 and the SU Institutional Plan 2015–2020, a five-year rolling plan, designed to give effect to the institutional intent (SU Annual Report 2014:18).

1. Identity and relevance

A tension between the notions of **identity** and **relevance** sets the idea that a university's identity as such is inextricably concerned with and defined by the pursuit of abstract knowledge (against the insistence that it should also be a socially relevant institution engaged in the training of students to fulfil useful roles in the economy and the labour market) and pursuing research outputs of immediate practical utility to society at large (Rossouw 1993:32–37). This polarity relates to research and teaching and learning activities and also brings into focus the relevance of what in the Botman years was termed 'community interaction'.

Russel Botman's tenure as rector saw the University becoming more socially committed and relevant than ever before in its history. Of particular significance was a greater emphasis on importance of the Community Development function of the institution, even though this is not statutorily recognised as a university responsibility. This shift was reflected, *inter alia*, by the portfolio of the Vice-Rector: Operations and Management being changed to that of Community Interaction and Personnel in order to enhance the stature of this aspect of the universities activities. It is fair to say that the University has established itself as a national leader in this

regard in the tertiary sphere. Amongst many achievements in enhancing the social relevance of Stellenbosch, mention may perhaps be made of the Rural Initiative intended to further rural development. A cornerstone of this initiative is the Ukwanda Rural Clinical School, established in 2012 at Worcester to support the Western Cape government with regard to capacity building and by improving health care (SU Annual Report 2012:14), following which the University's Legal Aid Clinic and other departments have also established a presence there (SU Annual Report 2014:23). Mention may also be made of the partnership with provincial Educational Departments for the support of Grade 11 and 12 school learners by means of the University's Division for Telematic Services to provide learning support while also improving the articulation between school and higher education (SU Annual Report 2012:14).

Of greater significance was a decisive shift in respect of the research function of the University to a focus on science of the highest standard in service of societal needs. The roots of this development can be traced to Botman's affirmation at his installation in 2007 to the commitment in the University's *Strategic Framework for the Turn of the Century and Beyond* (2000) "to create and sustain, in commitment to the University's ideal of scholarly and scientific practice, an environment in which knowledge can be discovered and can be shared and can be applied to the benefit of the community". The explicit linkage of Excellence in Teaching and learning and Research to social impact was principally informed and stimulated by the alignment in the University's strategic planning in these areas to central themes of UN's Millennium Development Goals within the broad framework provided by what was styled as the Pedagogy of Hope (SU Annual Report 2007:7). By means of projects developed by faculties and other role players and funded by Council as part of an Overarching Strategic Plan (OSP) under the aegis of the HOPE Project, management sought to effect a realignment of core activities of teaching and learning, research and community interaction to facilitate research on crucial social issues, to generate new understandings of these problems with a view to apply these in decisive ways for the betterment of society.

This development is fully discussed elsewhere in this work. Here, it is important to stress that the repositioning did not compromise academic

quality and standards. The process strengthened the capacities of the institution by enhancing inter-disciplinary work, establishing synergies across areas of endeavour and stimulating a resourceful management of skills, expertise and financial means (see SU Annual Report 2009:6). In addition, strong management and improved funding of the postgraduate platform and increased research outputs saw a dramatic improvement in the University's research profile. By 2009 already, the University matched the research success levels of the University of Cape Town and for a number of years running since, data from the Department of Higher Education and Training recognise it as the most productive research university in South Africa (SU Annual Report 2014:23; see also SU Annual Report 2013:1,7; SU Annual Report 2010:7). This trend toward improved research excellence is also apparent from an increased dissemination of outputs in international journals (SU Annual Report 2011:13), the steady increase in the DHET subsidy for books and chapters in books and conference proceedings received by the University and the fact that SU remains a national leader as far as patents derived from research are concerned. The number of researchers rated by the National Research Foundation (including 13 A-researchers in 2014: SU Annual Report 2014:23) has escalated and so has the number of SARChI chairs hosted at SU (see SU Annual Report 2013:18 and SU Annual Report 2014:23) and an increasing number of postdoctoral research fellows.

Important progress was made in the improvement of the University's international academic profile as regards overseas alumni, partner institutions in Africa, Europe and the United States. This is reflected inter alia in the increased extent to which international support for development programmes are being funded through the University, the increase in income derived from bilateral research agreements, the strengthening of research partnerships with industry as a result of an increased success rate of applications under the Technology and Human Resources for Industry Programme (THRIP) and growing success with proposals for European Union funding under a competitive funding programme that requires strong international research partnerships. The growth in private donations, research awards and contracts resulted in income from these sources being recognised as components of the University's budget (SU Annual Report 2011:8). As a result of excellent academic and research achievements, and greater visibility, the University for the first time found itself on three

world ranking lists in 2011, namely the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings, the Times Higher Education World University Rankings and the University of Leyden ranking of the top 500 research universities in the world (SU Annual Report 2011:8). On the QS list of world universities, Stellenbosch University has now moved out of the block of universities lying between the 400th and 450th position and has climbed to an individual 387th place to lie among the leading research-driven universities (SU Annual Report 2013:17).

Apart from long-term planning initiated under previous rectors such as Mike de Vries and Andreas van Wyk, and the impetus and stimulus provided by the HOPE Project, a variety of less obvious initiatives contributed to these results. Mention may be made of the implementation of integrated inter-generational staff plans for all university environments, directed strategic recruitment to attract and retain the best expertise to the University as well as a focus on the career development of young academics (including attracting a greater number of postdoctoral fellows) to ensure sufficient exposure. Important also was initiatives to ensure satisfactory knowledge transfer to developing academics and the optimal use of mentorships. A strategic decision to extend the period of employment of personnel from 60 to 65 ensured the preservation of the University's knowledge base while providing leverage to ensure a transfer of knowledge and the mentoring of an upcoming generation of scholars. Although this move elicited criticism in certain quarters, it reflected a courageous choice in the medium and longer term interests of the institution as a whole over a choice in favour of a more obvious transformational agenda.

The postgraduate programme has been extended and excellence improved by innovative means. Postgraduate enrolment in 2014 amounted to 10 119 of 28 869 enrolled students, of whom 1 385 were doctoral candidates (SU Annual Report 2014:23). Notable innovations that came into fruition under the guidance and with the support of the rector are the resort to the telematic platform to extend access, the establishment of the Carnegie Research Commons, an ultramodern, interactive learning space in the University's central library (SU Annual Report 2011:12). Russel Botman also took a particular interest in the African Doctoral Academy (ADA), which offers research training and support of a high quality to current and prospective

doctoral students and to academics who supervise and manage postgraduate students, and which further served to increase the academic expertise level of the University (Report Council 2011).

For Russel Botman, as a former vice-rector van Teaching and Learning, the University's undergraduate teaching programmes remained a vital aspect of the University's academic enterprise during his tenure as rector. Remarkable results have been achieved. As regards teaching and learning, the University progressed from the fifth position amongst South African universities in respect of student success in 2005 to the third position in 2008 and it has remained at the apex of achievement since then. In 2013, for instance, the University's module success rate, reflecting the percentage of students who passed the modules for which they had registered, was 85,9%, the highest in South Africa in 2013 (SU Annual Report 2014:36).

A principal reason for this progress improvement has been the institution of a First Year Academy as from 2007 (SU Annual Report 2007:9). Its consolidation and full development by 2011 (SU Annual Report 2012:23) has contributed to keeping our first-year retention rate at 86 to 87% by means of, inter alia, early assessment of students and continuous, multifaceted student support systems with learning and teaching coordination points in each faculty. Allied to this has been the promotion of innovation in teaching and learning by means of a greater emphasis on tutorships in association with the initiation and development of an approach whereby residence and private students are increasingly being integrated in student communities (clusters) centred around a building (known as a 'hub') housing a mentoring programme staffed by senior students with a view to provide support to some 4000 first-year students in small groups (SU Annual Report 2012:23; SU Annual Report 2011:8 and see the discussion of this initiative in Chapter 5 of this volume). The cluster initiative has been strengthened by the establishment of the AmaMaties Hub to provide a learning-oriented 'day home' to commuting students with access to learning material via web-based technology, an opportunity for interactive learning within peer groups and support by mentors (SU Annual Report 2012:14). Substantial funding has also been made available to promote technologically mediated instruction at a globally competitive level (SU Annual Report 2014:38). These initiatives, coupled with improved student financial support, the optimal utilisation

of physical facilities such as classrooms and other teaching and living-and-learning spaces, have ensured the consolidation of an academic training programme marked by excellence and a refusal to compromise academic standards.

2. Universality and particularity

A second area of tension exists between **universality** and **particularity**. The former connotes that a university is characterised by a universal vision and that teaching and research should be informed by the values of rational enquiry and objective engagement transcending parochial points of view. On the other hand, the fact that universities originate in particular socio-cultural contexts gives rise to the perception that they are by this account inextricably related to and determined by the linguistic, cultural or religious communities with which it is involved (Rossouw 1993:37–40).

This tension field brings to the fore that Stellenbosch University is perceived as historically rooted in the Afrikaans speaking section of the population, a view reinforced by the legacy of Jan Marais to the University to promote study in Dutch and Afrikaans and the symbolic significance of the majority of the premiers of the Union of South Africa having been educated at Stellenbosch, its links with Afrikaans institutions such as the Dutch Reformed Church, Nasionale Pers and *Die Burger* and institutional support for the Apartheid policies of the Nationalist Party. The Afrikaans character of the institution finds expression in the recognition of Afrikaans as the predominant medium of instruction for the greater part of its history and the informing influence of the Afrikaans culture in the student residences which constitute the essence of student experience at Stellenbosch. The transition of Stellenbosch University from a perceived “volksuniversiteit” to a world class university pursuing a more universal vision has been a long-term process. Initiated by shifts in Afrikaner thinking and identity and fostered by the democratisation of the country and the process of globalisation, the process was already well under way when Russel Botman became rector. To Botman fell the responsibility to deal decisively with the need to redefine Stellenbosch as a South African rather than a primarily Afrikaans university and to consolidate and steer its progress towards recognition as an institution espousing values embedded in a democratic constitutional order rather than relatively more parochial principles. In the process, he was required to deal

with conflicting pressures exerted from those insisting on the retention of the traditional character of the institution and the claims of those in favour of adapting the institutional character to the changes in its context.

A first concern turned on challenges to the received institutional and student culture and practices posed by the transformational imperatives in respect of race and language. These were addressed by initiatives to transform the institutional culture of student residences and campus traditions in order to promote inclusivity as regards race, language and cultural orientation, the proscription of initiation practices and the development of monitoring practices and the putting in place of extended welcoming and orientation programmes for new students. In many respects, a turnaround has been achieved in respect of the negative aspects of the established institutional culture.

The primary and to some extent defining focus of Botman's tenure in respect of the polarity between the pursuit of universal academic concerns and its cultural heritage was, however, the endeavour to develop a language policy suitable for the situation the University found itself in. This process required the reconciliation of a host of conflicting impulses and soon brought with it intense debate and contestation involving management, academics, members of the Convocation, the public and the Afrikaans press.

At the heart of the matter was the concern to sustain and protect the cultural heritage of the Afrikaans language and its role as an academic language while bringing it into balance with transformational claims derived from the fundamental rights of equality and non-discrimination embodied in the Bill of rights of the Constitution. This centred on the imperative to improve students from previously disadvantaged groups' access, for whom tuition in Afrikaans was perceived as a barrier to entry, designed to exclude them in order to preserve a white, Afrikaans academic enclave. This issue was tied up with and complicated by the demographic realities of the country. The operational need to ensure the sustainability of the institution militated in favour of improved access for students not conversant in Afrikaans and also not interested in acquiring the language. The need to appoint academics from other than the traditional sources and to improve research outputs in high profile international journals in order to enable the University to

take its place as a player on the global stage also required a policy designed to serve the universal academic interests of the University rather than the preservation of Afrikaans as a scientific language.

In 2007, when an investigation by a Language Task group into proposals for a revised language policy resulted in further conflict, Management stepped in to resolve matters by means of an alternative proposal to Council which, while retaining the existing policy, provided for the recognition of lectures in parallel streams in Afrikaans and English (the so-called A&E specification) together with lectures in Afrikaans as default options which could be resorted to without permission, the provision of teaching materials in both languages and an investigation into the viability of “innovative use of language technology” to promote multilingualism. The responsibility for the implementation of the plan was devolved to faculties to be monitored by way of dean’s strategic plans and extent to which these were implemented (SU Annual Report 2007:10). By 2009, the issue of the language of instruction was still receiving inordinate attention from management, Senate, Council and various interested groups. This resulted in the approval of a new Undergraduate Language of Instruction model as from 2010 which rested on two legs. A formula was developed to determine a minimum offering of tuition in Afrikaans, which the SU Council fixed at a level of at least 60% of undergraduate modules for the period 2010 to 2013. The plan confirmed the so-called parallel-medium option as a default policy option in addition to the Afrikaans option. As a result, parallel-medium instruction was adopted at first year level in four faculties in 2010. The following year saw the introduction of the parallel-medium option in two further faculties and its extension beyond the first year in the faculties which had introduced it in 2010. Smaller faculties, where the parallel-medium option was unfeasible for financial reasons, sought to address the aims of the policy by means of the dual medium option and, for the first time also, by utilising real-time interpreting services (SU Annual Report 2009:9). The concern was to deal responsibly with Afrikaans by developing a language plan that would consolidate the position of the language as a medium of instruction while at the same time facilitating the delivery of multilingual graduates, improving accessibility for black students who did not have Afrikaans as a school language while affording Afrikaans-speaking

students the opportunity to study in their mother tongue with a view to ensuring that all students are academically successful. In subsequent years, the University endeavoured to extend the multilingual teaching model. In the course of 2012, a report on parallel-medium instruction confirmed its effective implementation and its contribution to accessibility and student success. A further report envisaged the potential of educational interpreting to these ends and proposed a greater resort to it (SU Annual Report 2012:18). A further revision of the Language Policy in 2014 stipulated that Afrikaans be protected and promoted as an academic language within a multilingual university environment, the objective being to increase the total number of module credits offered in Afrikaans and English to 75% each by way of interpreting and parallel-medium teaching within the next five years (SU Annual Report 2014:15).

Russel Botman inherited a Council deeply divided on the issue of language and the underlying question as to the cultural character of the institution. In the face of enormous and at times vituperative public pressure, he consistently sought to play a reconciliatory role calculated to build upon and utilise the positive aspects of the University's Afrikaans heritage for the benefit of the institution and the interests of Afrikaans students and to reconcile it to the building of a non-racial approach in the institution. It would have been simpler for him, as a black person, to be more aggressive on the issues of Africanisation and transformation, but his strong insistence on the need to provide teaching and learning in the mother tongue of students evoked a positive response from the powers that be on the condition that the issue of Afrikaans was not used as an exclusionary stratagem. The complexity of the language plan and its various options has proven to be not readily understandable to an outsider and was perhaps also not always effectively communicated to interested parties. This aggravated the risk of misunderstanding and distrust attendant on any attempt to adopt a reconciliatory approach in respect of complex and contested issues.

3. Elitism and egalitarianism

A polarity between **elitism** and **egalitarianism** contrasts a vision of universities as meritocracies of talent and as such elitist institutions in so far as admission, the standard of the curriculum and graduation rates

are concerned, with one offering equal access to all irrespective of prior qualifications and financial means (Rossouw 1993:40–44). During the Botman years, this tension played itself out in the attempts to transform the University, especially as a result of a state driven and constitutionally founded demand for the transformation of tertiary institutions as regards the diversity of both the student body and the staff complement. Because of the concern about the possible exclusionary effect of tuition in Afrikaans, this issue inevitably added to and was complicated by the intense debate and contestation at Stellenbosch over the language issue.

A variety of strategies were employed in an attempt to accelerate diversification among academic staff comprising, *inter alia*, an emphasis on multi-year personnel plans in faculties to identify opportunities for diversity appointments, to make provision for succession planning, stricter regulation of the continued employment of pensioners, the optimal use of existing remuneration strategies to acknowledge and reward scarcity and initiatives to foster a welcoming and inclusive institutional culture. Strategic recruitment initiatives under the Legacy Project brought notable successes in the appointment of senior academics from the black, coloured and Indian sections of the population groups. The concern to balance seemingly contradictory policy considerations already referred to, was also evident in the debate whether the age of retirement should be moved from 60 to 65. Russel Botman resisted characterising the issue as entailing a binary opposition between the retention of the supposed academic excellence of senior white academics and the need to advance transformational goals by increasing opportunities for the recruitment of black academics. In 2009, the percentage of black, coloured and Indian staff members with permanent appointments stood at 38,4% and it was decided to set a target of 53% by 2015/2020 (SU Annual Report 2009:7). In 2014, the percentage of permanent SU employees from the coloured, black and Indian (CBI) population groups stood at 43,2% (SU Annual Report 2014:20).

Although the progress with regard to the diversification of academic staff might very well have been relatively slower than Botman might have wanted, his approach ensured progress without compromising in any way the knowledge base of the University. Progress during his tenure was in any event

constrained by a traditionally low staff turnover rate. The strategic plans put in place left the University well placed to move towards a more representative academic and research corps in consequence of a significant increase in the expected number of vacancies through retirement as from 2012.

An important theme of Russel Botman's tenure as rector has been his efforts to advance the diversity of the student corps significantly at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. This process was guided by means of progressive targets for the enrolment of students from the designated groups for faculties and implemented by a range of measures. Apart from directed enrolment planning to ensure greater representivity amongst groups, targeted recruitment drives to attract under-represented students, initiatives to ensure preferential residence placement for at-risk and under-represented students and the implementation of language plans in a manner to promote diversity and a measured but realistic extension of recruitment bursaries and levels of financial support for students have brought significant successes (SU Annual Report 2010:8). Further initiatives to promote diversity include: Commuter service for students, the introduction of a Hubs for day students, the extension of the multilingual teaching model and improvement of the articulation between school education and higher education by supporting learners by means of the Telematic platform (SU Annual Report 2011:13) and revision of the University's Residence Placement Policy (SU Annual Report 2012:16).

In 2007, black, coloured and Indian students constituted 29.5% of the student body (SU Annual Report 2007:9). In 2014, the respective figure was 36,6% with a target of 45,5% in place for 2020 (SU Annual Report 2014:20).

4. **Autonomy and constraint (*beperking*)**

The dichotomy between **autonomy** and **constraint** (*beperking*) involves the need to balance the traditional claim of universities to institutional autonomy regarding what is taught and researched and professed, and by whom, and how academic affairs are to be conducted, with the claims of supporting constituencies and institutions and that its affairs be conducted with due regard for both social and moral codes and statutory and administrative regulations and the expectations of public and private funders (see Rossouw 1993:44–48).

Issues related to formal aspects of institutional governance, such as the revision of the University Statute, the development of a Delegation Framework and the observation of the guidelines of the King Codes of Corporate Governance, were attended to at the rector's insistence. The implications for the University of far-reaching statutory developments such as the National Credit and the Consumer Protection Acts also received due attention. Noteworthy was the impeccable manner in which instances of alleged malpractice in the managerial sphere were dealt with according to applicable legal regulations and procedures.

The management of the University's finances and resources received close and detailed attention during Russel Botman's tenure. A streamlining of the budgetary process, the implementation of a full cost approach as from 2010 and the adoption of an integrated approach taking into account all income and expenditure enabled a closer focus on the financial aspects of core activities and facilitated the identification of priorities. The concerted effort to redress serious backlogs that had developed regarding the maintenance and upgrading of buildings, facilities and technological systems in context of an approved master plan constituted a major achievement, and forms part of a combined effort to ensure the continued existence of the University as a sustainable institution the broadest sense of the word.

A recognition of the university as part of the local community found expression in a renewed emphasis on sound relations between the University and the local municipality with due regard to the interdependence of these institutions and the reciprocal needs and entitlements of these communities (SU Annual Report 2010:11). Sound relations at the local community level were reflected at the provincial and national level, inter alia as a result of the establishment of Ukwanda Rural Clinical School at Worcester and other initiatives of the HOPE Project. A dividend of the University's growing reputation for academic excellence has been an appreciation at national level of the University as a national asset, reflected in support from the state for the University's research capacity and its needs as regards facilities and its treatment of so-called unfunded students.

5. Community and corporatism

As regards their organisational structures and procedures, universities are subject to a tension between **community** and **corporativism**. Universities are traditionally understood as consisting of communities of scholars and students organised by means of a system of committees characterised by a rotating membership and an absence of hierarchy. Stellenbosch University, for instance, is characterised by strong collegial structures: Faculties maintain autonomous profiles and a comprehensive and sometimes cumbersome system of committees oversees academic processes, formal adoption of a system of decentralised management, responsibility devolved to faculties and other responsibility centres. An opposing view is that because of its size and the financial scope of its activities, universities should, with a view to efficient and responsive decision-making and accountability, adopt the management structures, line functions and procedures of the modern commercial corporation (Rossouw 1993:48–52).

This tension played itself out Russel Botman's tenure to some extent in the restructuring of senior management portfolios with a view to a more effective corporate structure, but principally manifested itself in indications that management occasionally experienced the collegial system as an obstacle in the way of supple and quick management responses required in a competitive and challenging environment. The fate of the Language Task Team's revision of the Language Policy and Plan, which was in 2007 impulsively pre-empted by a managerial initiative regarding the position of parallel-medium instruction, is a case in point. The rector's concern for a more direct line of authority over faculties was evident in the attempt to institute a so-called Rector's Academic Forum (RAF) similarly attests to an impatience with perceived obstacles in way of achieving transformational goals. A centralising tendency was apparent from a pre-occupation with the accumulation of balance funds by faculties, which eventually resulted in the overhaul of budgetary principles to make more funds available for allocation centrally.

EVALUATION

Russel Botman's exceptional achievement was to be appointed head of the institution from which he was previously excluded. From the above

overview, Russel Botman emerges as someone deeply committed to a vision of the University as embedded in and serving an inclusive South African society rather than merely a segment of it. He was furthermore driven by the need to make a significant difference in his sphere of influence and to leave both the University and the society it serves better than before.

To this end, he stepped away from a previous commitment to a more radically transformative stance during the time of struggle, paving the way for a transition from a social activist to a corporate manager. To this task he brought a gift for visionary leadership derived from his theological training and background, often articulated by means of epigrammatic phrases such as the “Pedagogy of Hope” and the “HOPE Project” and informed by the inspirational decision to link the University’s developmental agenda to the Millennium Development Goals. In so doing, he created both the context and impetus for a fundamental reconceptualisation of the University’s self-image and its strategic goals, which have proven to be of decisive importance for a repositioning of the institution and an enhancement of its public image.

Botman’s leadership role was sustained by his inclination and ability to seek the middle ground and to play the role of a bridge builder and reconciler concerned with establishing inclusivity in the university context. In this guise Botman endeavoured to bring together people and ideas often thought to be in fundamental opposition to one another. His holistic vision and an aversion to reducing problematic issues to binary and exclusionary opposites enabled him to resist the temptation to adopt single policy goals and rather to strive for the optimal attainment of multiple and often conflicting goals, e.g. to conceive of a university as functioning in both Afrikaans and English and to reject the notion that transformation implied a sacrifice of academic excellence. This broadminded approach, although a strength and a gift, was, in the final analysis, a source of difficulty and personal stress. The development of complex and nuanced policies and plans brought with it the risk of being misunderstood by single issue activist groups. This at times resulted in uncertainty and distrust within the complex constellation of groups that constitute the stakeholders in the University. From a personal perspective, the easier route would have been to adhere to a more radical stance. In the result, however, his balancing of the forces acting on the fabric of the University has left behind an institution better geared to fit

into and contribute to a rapidly changing society. In so doing, he has made a fundamental contribution to the overall and lasting sustainability of the University.

Ellen Tise and Russel Botman with the introduction of the HOPE Project.

Photo: SCPS

7. HOPE PROJECT

*Martin Viljoen*¹

Like the fresh wind that hit Stellenbosch in the person of Professor Hayman Russel Botman, for many in Stellenbosch the HOPE Project was also surprisingly new, excitingly different and even a bit strange.

Russel Botman was the HOPE Project. He believed in it and he was very sure about what could be achieved by it. He lived it and in this way he let the whole campus community buy into it.

He dreamed big when it came to the HOPE Project. With a science-for-society approach and forefront research backed by international networks, Botman believed there is hope for millions on the continent. The HOPE Project was truly “ambitious, comprehensive and integrated” as Botman himself described it.

As big as Botman could dream, he could also derive endless pleasure, even from the smallest piece of innovating thought that came to the fore that now reigned on campus via the new spirit. A candleholder made of wire, the “Candle of Hope” that was not only safer to use in poor communities, but would also develop entrepreneurship, made him very excited.

True to a sceptical spirit which has to rule at institutions of higher education, the HOPE Project was not without its critics. Some demanded an academic justification for the project and would whisper, based on a misrepresentation of Botman’s theological background: “Don’t ministers belong on the other side of the Moederkerk?”

However, Botman was an inspirer who could draw each and all into his “congregation”, and now there are very few people who do not think back on the Botman era with nostalgia. The “one and only Russel” who could

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make friend and foe think differently about Stellenbosch – he was different and, after all, he was the rector. Stellenbosch, too, could be different!

After the transformer Chris Brink came to rattle Stellenbosch’s foundations, the bridge builder Botman stepped forward with a hope narrative. And the HOPE Project was the vehicle with which he brought hope to many, including the University itself. To Stellenbosch, Botman was a novelty, and similarly the HOPE Project was different and surprisingly new to Stellenbosch University (SU). It was an era characterised by a new energy on campus. Building projects were launched, institutes were set up and the Stellenbosch University’s outward face became friendlier and less formal. Stellenbosch University got a *smiley face*.

BACKGROUND TO THE HOPE PROJECT

Several factors led to the inception of the HOPE Project. Those close to Botman will probably refer to a theological foundation with *hope* as core element of the Christian faith. Naturally it was part of Botman’s own theological basis and view on life.

But, said Mr Desmond Thompson, senior writer in the rector’s office, who worked very closely with Botman, he (Botman) was thoroughly aware of the secular nature of the University and of his position. “He consciously endeavoured to prevent the HOPE Project from acquiring a religious colour or sound – precisely because he knew that some people attributed it to his background as theologian and minister.”

It would therefore have been a mistake to equate Botman’s hope to a desire, just a wish that things will go better in the future. To him it was much more: hope had to be created and it had to be offered – and it had to be put into action.

Other chapters in this book provide insightful information on Botman’s theological foundation, and that suffices. It is therefore enough to say here that the HOPE Project would be a way to heal our country and its oppressed past – to “make up” to a degree for the institution’s own share in the past. SU would and could be an important vehicle to rectification. That in itself can be interpreted as ironic – that it had to be Stellenbosch of all places.

And there probably is a bit of irony in Botman's career: the same institution that would serve as the birthplace of apartheid thinking, could become the instrument, with the first coloured rector, through which reconciliation and rectification would be facilitated. In this, Botman had to have seen a great opportunity – a great chance to undo the mistakes of the past.

He would, however, always act in a reconciliatory way. Right from the start, it was for him an “us” and not a “you”. He would never distance the SU and its history from himself, but he would rather identify with the institution's problematic past.

FIRST INDICATORS

In Botman's inaugural speech in April 2007, entitled “A multicultural University with a pedagogy of hope for Africa”, were important indicators of how the Botman era – and what later would become known as the HOPE Project – would unfold. He says, among other things:

SU is known widely for its academic excellence in all our key functions. Our dilemma, as well as our challenge, is how to move from success to significance, given the changing socio-political milieu in which this University has to operate and within which it has to attain greater meaning for all our people. This is an incisive question about the central challenges facing SU for us to be able to say proudly that we wish to be a University of meaning and significance for South Africa and Africa. At the heart of this lie the dilemmas of credibility, relevance, student success, people management and Afrocentricity. We suffer from a lack of credibility, despite our excellence. We also do not display enough relevance, despite our ability to produce sought-after students for industry. We also do not radiate enough of a spirit of Afrocentric expertise, despite our strong international profile. To face these dilemmas head-on, we need to understand the core of our own institutional strength and establish a new pedagogical framework – A Pedagogy of Hope.

The themes of credibility, relevance, student success, human management and Afro-centricity would form further important themes in his term of office – also of the HOPE Project. It formed the later foundation of the HOPE Project. Formulated in “HOPE language”: “world-class research on local, regional and Africa issues in ultramodern facilities with the foremost knowledge to create the best opportunities for teaching and learning and the development of a new generation of thought leaders”, and “the search

for sustainable scientific solutions for Africa’s challenges from the higher education sphere”.

Botman also did not beat about the bush. The SU had to be *significantly different* and can be *significantly better*, he declared. Sometimes he cuts to the bone – like with a statement that later almost became a mantra for the HOPE Project – that the farmworker’s daughter should have the same opportunities as the farmer’s son.

It was clear that Botman wanted to swing the ship’s nose in a different direction. He gave recognition to SU’s successes – and his predecessors – but did not shy away from dealing with sensitive issues. It was not despair, however, but rather the challenge that Botman saw for the University – to bring hope to an unsure world.

Thompson summarised it strikingly: “Under Russel Botman it would become the University’s ‘purpose of existence’ within this type of challenges to create hope in society by striving for workable solutions – true to the nature of the University, within the framework of the science, broadly defined, in each of the institution’s three core activities, namely research, teaching, and community interaction.”

Possibly to the frustration of critics, Botman did not practise these “new” thoughts in a vacuum, but strategically aligned it with the international development goals, while working towards aligning SU’s functioning with them.

WAS THE HOPE PROJECT COMPLETELY NEW?

At this point it is important to ask whether the HOPE Project really was so strange and out of place. Was it really only driven by Botman’s own personality, background and experiences? These were strong motivators and the HOPE Project was indeed unusual. But, in contrast to what some believed, Bosman actually concurred with existing processes at the University that have been in action since its centenary.

Undoubtedly Botman should be praised for how he succeeded in placing the University on a new trajectory, for his fresh approach, for the sheer extent and imaginativeness with which he saw the road ahead for SU, but it was

not out of step with the Stellenbosch story at that stage. He strategically concurred with a document originating from the year 2000, the *Strategic Framework for the Turn of the Century and Beyond*, one of the most important SU documents after the democratic transition in South Africa.

Among other issues, the document regards the following as important: Although rectification involves all aspects of the University, the University considers its commitment to realise justice and its commitment to service as major instruments in the effort to rectify past injustices.

And Botman himself said: “I wish to dedicate my term of office as rector and vice-chancellor of Stellenbosch University to the realisation of this self-declared commitment by the people of our University. This institutional declaration will now become a pursuit.”

Thompson confirms this: “When he publically introduced his HOPE Project on 21 July 2010, he explained that this commitment is contained in 2000 in the University’s *Strategic Framework for the Turn of the Century and Beyond*. In this, SU admitted its share in the ‘injustices’ of the past and committed itself to rectifying it. This would be pursued through ‘justice’ (the building of a more inclusive staff and student corps); and ‘service’ (the promotion of development against the background of the urgent needs in South Africa and the rest of the continent).”

Botman also writes in the 2010 Annual Report: “This emphasis on academic excellence and service to the community was once again confirmed by the academic leadership of the University as at the heart of the SU’s new positioning. The *leitmotif* of hope is a new embodiment, therefore, of the aims of the Strategic Framework, namely to understand the problems scientifically and to use science to make a difference in the context of the challenges of the 21st century.”

The Strategic Framework was also used as a guide for the compilation of several other visionary documents including the “watershed document” (as it was presented to the media), the *Institutional Intent and Strategy* (2013) which Botman himself regarded as the highlight of his career. This document is widely seen as that which the HOPE Project led to (more information later).

Botman further declares: “With the existing Vision as starting point, it is my aim to upgrade the University to an institution in Africa that not only wants to be significantly ‘different’, as based on our past, but also wants to be significantly ‘better’, as seen in our commitment with regard to the future of our country and the continent’s people.”

Botman told alumni in London (2010) that he saw the HOPE Project as “the practical realisation of the University’s moral decision to break with the past and help build a better future”. And there was a definite connection between this endeavour and Botman’s own convictions.

BUILD-UP TO LAUNCH

The official announcement of the HOPE Project only came in 2010 – three years after Botman’s inauguration. It, however, was not just years of inactivity; behind the scenes hard work gave substance to what was known as the Overarching Strategic Plan (OSP) – the forerunner to the HOPE Project.

In short, the purpose of the OSP was to ensure that the University not only continually improves on academic level, but also remain relevant, make a contribution to solve the country and continent’s problems and align the institution with the international development goals mentioned above.

As part of the OSP, faculties were requested in 2009 to propose projects which could link to one or more of the development themes and could be managed sustainably. Initially, 21 projects were chosen that would qualify for additional funding. These projects stood firm in academics and research, and examined issues such as combating corruption, obstacles in the obliteration of poverty and food security in order to find sustainable solutions.

The point of departure was that the individual projects funded by SU seed capital would be able to be managed in a financially sustainable way after a term of three years. The purpose was to polish these projects and use them to attract external funding.

The OSP was therefore also the vehicle for taking forward the promises that he made at his inauguration. He said: “Our talented students and staff,

the joint quality of our leadership, the excellence of our knowledge-based programmes and the way in which our research, teaching and community interaction is aimed at our five chosen development themes, prove how we transform our vision into something tangible. Through the innovating work that we do to wipe out poverty and related circumstances in our communities, and to promote human dignity and health; peace and security, democracy and human rights, and to ensure a sustainable environment and competing industry, we believe that we will change the world.”

The OSP campaign was announced with great fanfare, among others by voicemail messages to staff and visual projections on buildings. The Stellenbosch and Tygerberg campuses were decorated with giant banners hanging from buildings – each referring to the University or relevant campus with “We believe we can change the world” as recurring theme. This ambitious slogan was typical of Botman!

This campaign was not without challenges, especially with regard to “believe”, which some connected to a theological framework. Others objected that it would be too ambitious to think that a specific academic faculty or the University as a whole could really change the world.

One thing that the OSP did succeed in, was to get staff, students and other concerned parties talking. This was confirmed by Mr Mohamed Shaikh, the then Senior Director: Communication and Liaison, who was in charge of most of the actions relating to the OSP and the HOPE Project: “Some attached a religious meaning to it; others experienced it as arrogant or saw it as a new logo and slogan for the University, but that was not the intention in the least,” he later wrote about it. “Of cardinal importance was to get staff and students talking. It is specifically in this regard that the internal launch seemed to have been a great success.”

Botman himself explained the rationale behind the ‘We believe’ theme: “Before you believe, nothing is possible. At Stellenbosch University, we believe that we are true builders of hope on the African continent, that we are pioneers in our application of science in service of the community, and that we can take on some of the world’s toughest challenges by using our proven strengths and expertise to convert hope into action.”

The breeding ground was created for the HOPE Project. Three months after the launch of the OSP on campus, the HOPE Project was officially introduced to the outside world.

LAUNCH OF THE HOPE PROJECT

The HOPE Project was announced on Wednesday 21 July 2010 amidst great media interest. The Division of Communication and Liaison (now Corporate Communication) and Development and Alumni Relations (then known collectively as Institutional Advancement) had at the time been working for months on among others a splendid launch in the Endler Hall of SU's Konservatorium (Conservatoire) where the Libertas Choir performed, a media launch in Cape Town, a conference with hope as theme and overseas launches. Several visual elements were emphasised by giant banners and flags in Victoria Street.

It was thus no surprise that Botman declared at the launch event that the HOPE Project as SU's new long-term strategic plan was "ambitious, comprehensive and integrated" – as mentioned above.

Part of the launch involved switching over (or "virtual bridge") to the *Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute*, the oldest technological research university in the USA with whom the University had a cooperation agreement at that stage.

Another part of the launch of the HOPE Project was a HOPE Conference with high-level participants like Albie Sachs, former judge of the Constitutional Court; Nokwezi Hoboyi of the Treatment Action Campaign; Phylicia Oppelt, the then editor of *The Times*; Ernst van Dyk, well-known wheelchair athlete; and senior academics, among others the Human Rights expert Prof Sandra Liebenberg and the then director of the Bureau for Economic Research, Prof Ben Smit.

Several national and international launch events followed – in Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth, George, Durban, Windhoek, Berlin, London, Amsterdam and in the USA.

From a media point of view the launch of the HOPE Project was a resounding success. Several media groups attended the media launch in Cape Town with good publicity generated in the printed, broadcasting and online media. Headings like “Hope for a future invested in others” (*Cape Argus*), “University aims to focus science on social change” (*Business Day*), “Maties pledge to work for the poor” (*Cape Times*) and “Maties wil met nuwe projek na almal uitreik” (*Die Burger*) testified to this.

The launch of the HOPE Project initiatives that followed also enjoyed good media coverage. Over the first six months of the HOPE Project, approximately R26 million’s advertising value was generated for the University and up to and until the celebration of the HOPE Project – in April 2012 – nearly R61,5 million.

“Botman was popular among journalists and the HOPE Project soon found favour with even the English media which all too often were seen as negative towards the University,” said Ms Susan van der Merwe, then Head: Marketing and Communication of the Division Communication and Liaison. “It was especially the innovating research, associated with the HOPE Project, which drew attention. The media success can definitely also be ascribed to hard facts, research, statistics and information that, through the HOPE Project, became real and became something which the media and their readers and viewers could identify with.”

At the launch event, Botman concurred with his inaugural speech and declared anew that SU aligns itself with the international development goals: “Our vision for our country and continent is a future free from poverty where the human dignity of all people is protected, where our social and ecological systems are healthy, and where peace, security and democracy are safeguarded. The HOPE Project puts into action the University’s commitment to play a role in working for such a country, such a continent, such a world.”

As mentioned earlier, the academic leaders of SU have by then already spent several months working on a series of visionary “hope creating” initiatives – at that time under the OSP banner – which each linked to one or more of the themes. Drive for these initiatives came from the initial funding of

R320 million from the SU Council. This HOPE Project and initiatives were introduced to the audience via a video.

For example: Focused on the theme “the eradication of poverty and related circumstances”, the SU Food Security Initiative was established, which, in a cross-disciplinary manner, brought together experts from several faculties to try to confront the challenge regarding food security.

The Youth Sport Initiative and the Ukwanda Rural Clinical School linked to the theme “promotion of human dignity and health” and the Centre for Corporate Management in Africa and MEDIAFRIKA in the Journalism Department linked to the theme “promotion of democracy and human rights”, The Africa Centre for Dispute Settlement and the Security Institute for Governance and Leadership are initiatives relating to the theme “the promotion of peace and security” and SU Water Institute and the innovating TsamaHub, both with sustainability as core theme related to the theme “the promotion of a sustainable environment and a competitive industry”.

Besides the academic initiatives, Botman also announced certain “cross-cutting initiatives” and “strategic goals”. Cross-cutting initiatives included divergent aspects and units such as “access to electronic resources, student success and research support”, the Centre for Complexity Studies, the School for Postgraduate Research (which included the African Doctoral Academy and cooperation with PANGeA, the Partnership for Africa’s Next Generation of Academics) as well as the virtual postgraduate learning support project. All this would be supported by three “strategic goals”, namely Facilities and Infrastructure, Student Success and Staff Success).

Botman says in his speech that SU has three core responsibilities. “The first is a moral responsibility. Given our history, we have a moral responsibility to the poor, to rural communities and to a diversity of individuals in our country. Our second responsibility is the historical responsibility to face up to the lingering burdens of the 20th century. The third responsibility is the responsibility to embrace the challenges of the 21st century, the world of a new generation of young people, new ways of learning, new opportunities for research and the need for harnessing emerging technologies on an ongoing basis” and “The HOPE Project is our way of living up to these responsibilities”.

The HOPE Project enables the University to do three things, he explained: “To be of service to society, addressing both existing problems and meeting future needs; to be the best university we can possibly be for a new generation; and to galvanise others into joining us in our quest to help make the world a better place.

“Our vision for our country and continent is a future free from poverty, where the human dignity of all people is protected, where our social and ecological systems are healthy, and where peace, security and democracy are safeguarded. We want to be seen to have played a role in realising this vision. The HOPE Project puts into action the University’s commitment to play a role in working for such a country, such a continent, such a world.”

The HOPE Project was ultimately intended to bring about practical, tangible change. Botman campaigned for researchers to do research that would make a difference – that is measureable. Several of the projects ensuing from the HOPE Project were exactly that. For months thereafter, as new projects were introduced, it captured the imagination – also in the media. A centre for anti-corruption at the University of Stellenbosch Business School, the Postgraduate School and the African Doctoral Academy that opposed the brain drain as well as the Food Security Initiative are some of the initiatives that kept the momentum of media exposure going. From a marketing point of view it also helped tremendously to present the University “differently”.

CAPITAL PROJECT

At the core of the HOPE Project was an equally ambitious capital project that was announced at the launch. After the HOPE Project received its first monetary injection from SU Council – R320 million was re-allocated from existing university funds. A target of R1,75 billion was set – at that stage probably the largest funding campaign in higher education in Africa.

“Because,” writes Botman in the 2010 Annual Report, “the approach that SU now has, is to confront science with some of the toughest challenges of our continent.

“At the same time, it means this to be instrumental in sustaining the University’s academic excellence in the 21st century. This, of course, poses

special demands in terms of the retention and recruitment of the best students and academic research staff; the offering of relevant learning and research programmes aligned with the demands of the times; and learning spaces that are in tune with the changing learning situations and requirements of the modern era (laboratories and technologically advanced facilities that raise learning, research and community interaction to new levels). In order to implement all of this successfully, SU needs considerable additional financial investment from philanthropic endowments and other sources of third-stream income. For this reason, a comprehensive fund-raising campaign was launched in conjunction with the HOPE Project.”

DEVELOPMENT ON CAMPUS

As mentioned above, first the OSP and thereafter the HOPE Project caused quite a stir on campus. The gears of the academic machine, however, do not turn fast. While Council fairly quickly threw its weight in behind the HOPE Project, the Senate – rightly being the body on campus that, true to the academic ideal, must be sceptical of new things – only later, in 2011, accepted a document entitled “Hope as guiding concept for Stellenbosch University”.

A senior academic at SU, who wanted to remain anonymous for the purpose of this piece, also confirms that initially academics were sceptical. “They struggled to reconcile a ‘woolly’ concept such as ‘hope’ with the scientific nature and attitude of a university. However, as the conversations developed and the message was repeated time and again, attitudes began to change. There definitely was buy-in later and most of the faculties saw the opportunities around the HOPE Project and made use of it. Some of these projects developed to ‘flagship projects’ of the University.”

According to the academic hope as theme has become a driving force in time and that possibly one of the biggest outcomes of the HOPE Project was that people started to think in a new way about the role of a university: “There were many conversations in which it was seriously considered how hope could be a driving force for a university and, even more important, in which people engaged in debates on the role of a university in the current South

Africa and Africa. This also led to a strengthening of the view that teaching/learning, research and community interaction as the three core functions of a university cannot take place in separate silos, but should germinate and enrich one another. It definitely led to a sharper focus on what our role in Africa is, especially through research and through partnerships in Africa, to help address the challenges of the continent.”

Prof Arnold van Zyl, the then vice-rector: Research confirms this initial scepticism: “There was indeed a reluctance to accept ‘hope’ as a starting point for research – largely due to the perception that ‘hope’ is a theological concept, but there was buy-in, especially as funding became available via the HOPE Project. The funding definitely helped to create a body of research across the faculties focussing on science and society aspects. Healthy scepticism remained despite the funding”.

He added that the research portfolio of the University was definitely influenced by the HOPE Project – especially once people started understanding that the outcomes of the research were transforming the lives of people in the community – and that even today the University can proffer the research portfolio that was built during that time as an example of how knowledge transforms society.

According to Thompson, criticism of the HOPE Project was not a problem for Botman. He welcomed courageous conversations, the test of the hypothesis and critical quests for truth – because the University is not an ideological factory but rather “a place of ideas – even controversial ideas”.

Botman would, however, sometimes get frustrated with the criticism, according to Thompson: “It was especially the broad brush that ‘the hope thing’ isn’t really my thing, or that ‘hope doesn’t work for me’, which irritated him – not because these remarks were critical, but because it was not nuanced, superficial and unreasonable. In fact, he thought it was short-sighted that those who were supposed to support the broad purpose of ‘science for society’, could not look beyond ‘hope’ and there was even played the fool with what he saw as the noble motive to not just accept the ‘given’ reality and rather strive after ‘the possible’ alternatives.”

MOMENTUM

The HOPE Project era is also characterised by several new initiatives on campus, new extensions and facilities. Several buildings on the various campuses today wear the HOPE Project logo.

Some of these initiatives are:

DATE	EVENT	DESCRIPTION
28 Apr 2010	The Standard Bank Centre for the Development of Business Leadership and Mentorship in Agribusiness is launched	A partnership between the SU and Standard Bank to counteract the high failure rate of land reform projects and budding commercial farms
30 Nov 2010	Inauguration of Ukwanda Student Learning Centre in Worcester	The Centre serves as basis for students in Health Sciences' clinical teaching and experience in a rural environment.
12 Nov 2010	Establishment of the Partnership for Africa's Next Generation of Academics (PANGeA), consisting of the Universities of Botswana, Makerere, Malawi, Dar es Salaam, Nairobi and Stellenbosch	The PANGeA agreement counteracts the brain drain from Africa and the decline of expertise on the continent by developing the next generation of African academics and professionals.
17–28 Jan 2011	The Africa Doctoral Academy (ADA) was officially introduced on 26 January 2011 and presents its first Summer School in Research Methods	ADA promotes human development through the result of counteracting the postgraduate brain drain and the decline in scholarship in Africa. ADA has the goal to deliver world-class doctoral graduates that can help face Africa's developmental challenges.
16 Feb 2011	Inauguration of the Learning Centre in the JS Gericke Library	A contemporary centre with technologically advanced equipment and innovating learning areas where registered students have access to the library's collections in printed and electronic format that the library is signed into, as well as user software.
15 Mar 2011	Inauguration of the MEDIAAFRIKA building (Department of Journalism)	A building consisting of a multi-functional lecture hall, a multimedia news office with audio and video editing studios and a creative recreational area for students. The facilities provided here aid in the training of top-quality journalists which will intensify the democracy in South Africa.

7. HOPE PROJECT

DATE	EVENT	DESCRIPTION
22 Mar 2011	Introduction of the SU Water Institute	An overarching home for different research groups in five faculties of the SU involved in water-related issues (health, agriculture and food, a sustainable environment, nanotechnology and social aspects with regards to water).
29 Mar 2011	Introduction of the Frederik Van Zyl Slabbert Institute for Student Leadership Development (FVZS)	The FVZS Institute, the first of its kind in South African higher education, develops students' leadership, communication, conceptual and management skills. The Institute cultivates ethical leadership and emphasises students' role as leaders in Africa and the rest of the world.
9 May 2011	Inauguration of the Research Centre in JS Gericke Library (later known as the Carnegie Research Commons)	An ultramodern, brand new facility for master's degree and doctoral students, academics and researchers of the SU with contemporary seminar rooms, video conference facilities and open-plan computer areas which help to increase postgraduate pass rates and research output.
18–20 May 2011	Conference on "Theology, Disability and Human Dignity" is held	Several international and national experts in the areas of theology, psychology, philosophy, medicine and ethics speak on challenges that people with disabilities face on a daily basis and the impact it has on their human dignity. The conference forms part of the Faculty of Theology's HOPE Project Initiative Focus on the Promotion of Human Dignity.
29–31 May 2011	Conference on Justice and Poverty takes place	The exploration of a series of themes like the legal construction of poverty, land reform and surety of land ownership, social transformation through litigation, the implications of service delivery protest of the law, property laws and output disputes, the gender dimensions of poverty and the impact of privatisation on the realisation of socio-economic rights like the right to water. The Conference forms part of the Faculty of Law's HOPE Project Initiative Combating Poverty, Homelessness and Socio-economic Vulnerability in terms of the Constitution.

DATE	EVENT	DESCRIPTION
12 Aug 2011	The Legal Aid Clinic opens a new wing	The new wing helps to meet the big question for the Legal Aid Clinic's free services to the needy, especially to members of previously disadvantaged communities.
1 Sep 2011	Launch of the Anton Mostert Chair in Intellectual Property Law at the SU thanks to a donation by Dr Johann Rupert, Chancellor of the University, in his capacity as executive chairperson and chief-executive officer of Richemont	The chair comprises capacity building in the pre- and postgraduate legal training; the development of knowledge on intellectual property law among non-jurists, like business people, computer programmers and artists through computer-based distance learning technology and an involvement in legal development and reform, nationally and internationally.
14 May 2012	Opening of the AmaMaties Hub	A unique learning and living centre which not only integrates the academic and social life of students, but also brings together students in university residences and those making use of private accommodation (PSO students).
16 May 2012	Opening of the new Facilities Management Building	A new home for the Facilities Management Division which boasts several green and energy saving features.
23 Oct 2012	Opening of a new home for the Africa Centre for HIV/Aids Management	The new centre provides for the sharp increase in activities of the centre and for the refinement of its HIV and Aids projects.

If Botman had something like a HOPE Project favourite, it probably was the iShack – a prototype eco-friendly home in Enkanini in Stellenbosch. As an example of how the HOPE Project makes a practical difference, this project was something that Botman often worked into speeches.

The iShack, a corrugated iron hut that was designed to protect its inhabitants against extreme temperatures and which included a solar panel for basic electricity needs, was the product of many months of working with trans-disciplinary research projects by, among others the TsamaHub, an initiative of the HOPE Project, which campaigned for long-term solutions for the sustainability crisis on the African continent.

Several other projects were also close to Botman's heart – especially those that had to do with student recruitment and success. On occasion he went as far as to say that the central goal of the HOPE Project was student success! He would often say in his speeches: “We do what we do, not for ourselves, but for the next generation.” In this regard, Botman probably received too little credit for his role as vice-rector (Teaching and Education) during which time he laid the basis for several of the projects that had student success as goal.

He was also passionate about the HOPE@Maties project, a Saturday and holiday school initiative to prepare learners for postgraduate study. To him, visits to these schools were a great pleasure, and an opportunity for presenting bursaries to many of the participants of the HOPE@Maties project.

The Learning Centre in the JS Gericke Library, a contemporary student-friendly learning and computer centre for pre-graduate students, and the Carnegie Research Commons, an ultramodern study area for postgraduate students (also in the JS Gericke Library) were tangible proof of Botman's emphasis on student success. He would often take VIP guests and international visitors there.

He also could not stop talking about the Department of Basic Education's telematics broadcasts to hundreds of schools via the University's telematics studio (called Virtual Postgraduate Learner Support) to academically supported learners.

Another dream that became true was the establishment of the Frederik Van Zyl Slabbert Institute for Student Leadership Development, named after the former chancellor of the SU and anti-apartheid activist. Thousands of Maties have already benefitted from the Institute's leadership training programmes.

Mindful of the fact that the launch of the HOPE Project was in the same year as the Soccer World Cup in South Africa, there were also a number of sport-related initiatives that Botman was lyrical about, like the launch of trilingual sport terminologies for soccer, rugby and cricket. Another sport-related project was the Youth Sport Initiative, a youth education and development programme in several rural communities in the Western Cape.

CELEBRATION OF THE HOPE PROJECT

With the start of Botman's second term in 2012, it soon became clear that sustainability would be an important theme over the next few years. It was also during this time that the HOPE Project had undergone a gear change with "Making HOPE happen", which gave shape to how Botman saw the HOPE Project in this new phase. More and more he would also link sustainability to projects in the HOPE Project. He wanted to see more projects in which the "quantum challenge" of sustainability, as he described it during the official celebration of the HOPE Project in April 2012, would be pivotal. One can only guess how prophetic the strong emphasis that Botman began placing on sustainability during this time would be over the next few years.

At the event held in the Conservatoire's Endler Hall, Botman again referred to the theme of hope which he already mentioned at his inauguration: "At my inauguration exactly five years ago, on 11 April 2007, I told you that I wanted to generate discussion on campus about hope. I said that the University should fight hopelessness and false hope by channelling all its science and focussing it on the agenda for development of our country, our continent and the world. That meant that we had to leave our ivory tower, think more broadly and ask more demanding questions. We had to ask how science could put right what had gone wrong in society. I also said that, if we did that, it would make us strong, because in that way we would progress from success to significance. To go from success to significance is a very big step for any institution as big and difficult to change and to turn as the University. We had to probe even deeper, asking ourselves how we could ensure that we would be relevant and that those who worked with us would find us credible. That was the most difficult part – to show our relevance and academic strength in a way that, when people look at us, they can see the integrity of science changing their world for the better. I think we have fared well in this. We have changed the conversation about SU. And we have done so by focussing our core functions – teaching and learning, research and community interaction. We have created for many people that light at the end of the tunnel. They know it is the sign of a victory."

It was mentioned earlier that Botman often emphasised student success as a goal for the HOPE Project. Strategically, he narrowed the gap between sustainability and student success. At the celebratory event, he once again stated that the future belongs to young people: “In the 21st century, students are not willing to continue living as before. They want to know from us: What are you doing for sustainability? What are you doing to bring down the electricity usage of the University? They ask the questions for the future. They ask questions that matter for the hope of the next generation. They lay the quantum challenges before us.”

An emotional highlight at the event was when Botman invited student leaders to join him on the stage and each lit a candle.

At a thanksgiving event for staff – also in April 2012 – he thanked staff for their share in the success of the HOPE Project. He said that the University has left a footprint – not just of knowledge, but of human dignity, a looking ahead, and a footprint of more people who are concerned about the future. “We have left an imprint that is not only an imprint of knowledge, but an imprint of humanity, of foresight, and an imprint of more people willing to stand up for the future.”

An important part of the celebration was the emphasis on the capital campaign, which surpassed the R1,75 billion milestone. At that stage, it was estimated that the HOPE Project had brought in nearly R2 billion’s donations, research contracts, awards and sponsorships. He gave recognition to among others the government, alumni, the Stellenbosch Trust, friends of SU, foundations and corporate donors. He said: “That we have reached this goal in the prevailing climate of a global economic downturn and shrinking state subsidies for higher education worldwide, is remarkable. It speaks to the power of the idea of hope – that we can achieve the extraordinary by reaching beyond the ordinary. It shows that the human spirit is stronger than the worst enemy that can stand up against it.”

Of course there was criticism with regard to the fund-finding claims, especially because some of the funds had already been earmarked for SU and therefore, according to critics, could not be claimed by the HOPE Project. However, judging by the large variety of initiatives, facilities and research

projects that were supported by HOPE funding – as well as the number of postgraduate students who completed their studies with HOPE funding – the financial injection brought about by the capital project and the leverage it gave to other initiatives, cannot be underestimated.

OUTCOMES OF THE HOPE PROJECT

Surely the biggest outcome of the HOPE Project was a new vision for the University. Stellenbosch University is inclusive, innovative and future focussed – a place of discovery and excellence where both staff and students are thought leaders in advancing knowledge in the service of all stakeholders.

This new vision is locked up in the University’s Institutional Intent and Strategy (IIS) – which was approved by Council in April 2013 – as the new route map for the University. Botman described this Council meeting as the most historic one of his term as rector and a highlight of his career.

Apart from a new way of thinking on campus and a number of new buildings and facilities carrying the HOPE Project logo, one of the biggest successes is probably the doors to the continent which opened further during Botman’s era. According to Mr Robert Kotze, Senior Director: Postgraduate and International Office, the reason for this was the fact that the academic community treated Africa seriously as the Africa database of cooperation shows. “The initiative and strong support of Prof Botman gave momentum to work which had already started with the Brink era, when cooperation in Africa became part of the management indicators.”

Further momentum was also given to this by Botman’s election as Vice-President of the Association of African Universities (AAU).

A few months before his death, Botman was instrumental in the establishment of two related international networks: Hope@Africa, a cooperation agreement between seven leading universities in Africa built on PANGAEA connections; and Hope International, a network between SU and four Swedish universities as introduced in March 2014. Together the partners would promote development and face some of the biggest challenges in society – in Africa, but also in the rest of the world. Botman’s

untimely death probably hampered the potential of these networks to bring about a big change in Africa.

Other successes include several conferences, media exposure for the University, the fact that students started to embrace the HOPE theme on various levels (an annual HOPE Summit is still held by higher education institutions in the Western Cape), and the large number of students who could complete their studies through the HOPE Project's funding.

Another important success factor is the healthy debates on campus, especially about the role of the University, instigated by the HOPE Project. Several HOPE Project initiatives also have an interdisciplinary nature and are spread across several faculties. There clearly is a greater awakening of not just working in stereotyped silos, but to rather focus on how "my" department or faculty can truly make a difference in the environment, region, country and continent.

Despite different points of view about the measurement of the HOPE Project's publicity (an accepted industry standard is the Advertising Value Equivalent – AVE), the initiative truly generated extremely positive media coverage, but even more importantly, it changed public conversations about SU for the better.

On another level the ethos of the HOPE Project inspired several alumni and other friends of SU, even outsiders, to get involved in several ways. The fruit of a greater consciousness with regard to investing in the University and its activities, cultivated during the HOPE Project, is only being picked now.

Along with that, true to Botman's nature, he did not want to keep the lessons he learnt during the fundraising efforts to himself. He wanted to share it with a wider African audience. In association with the AAU, Botman started to develop the alumni relations and fundraising functions at other African universities where it was relatively underdeveloped.

THE END OF THE HOPE PROJECT?

The question can rightly be asked: What has happened to the HOPE Project. Was it shipwrecked after Botman's death or was it replaced by the IIS?

The HOPE Project does not have a completion date and that is how it should be. Botman's legacy is imbedded in Stellenbosch University's DNA and tied up with the IIS. The three overhead priorities of SU are the following: broadening access; sustaining the momentum of excellence; and enhancing societal impact. To a large extent, this embodies the legacy of Hayman Russel Botman. Or as he himself would say:

We want to deepen the impact that we have made already and want to do it through improved cooperation with partners in Africa and abroad.

* * * * *

Prof Russel, I still miss your contagious laugh outside my office window when you chat with each and everyone on your way to your next meeting – even if it meant that you would be late. We honour you for the gift of the HOPE Project that you gave to Stellenbosch. You have truly taught us what it means to hope – and to believe. Because to believe “is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see”.

8. FROM EXCELLENCE TO SIGNIFICANCE – BOTMAN IN A WIDER CONTEXT

Marita Hilliges¹ and Andrew Casson²

When we lost H Russel Botman, the world of higher education lost a great leader of a kind that is very rare but that we are all sorely in need of. The world suddenly became a much poorer place. Russel's contribution to hope and peace in the world, and not least in contacts between North and South, was important. At Dalarna University, as throughout the network of Swedish universities that his ethos inspired, we miss him deeply and mourn his passing. All who met him must have felt the deepest respect for his humility and sincerity. For us, Russel was the best example of how we can live in a troubled and strife-ridden world and yet have hope for the future of humanity. Here, within the space of a few pages, we would like to exemplify the importance of Russel's international work by describing the impact he has had on one university on the northern edge of Europe, in the heartlands of Scandinavia.

Our university's first contact with H Russel Botman was in the late 1990s when a professor of Ethics, Karin Sporre, had met with Russel under the auspices of the Christian Council of Sweden and came to discuss academic collaboration. They had met before and had a common interest in issues of reconciliation after oppression, and of human dignity and human rights. Karin invited Russel to visit Dalarna for the first time in November 2000 and during the visit he gave a public lecture on the theme of Justice that restores. Justice and reconciliation in present day South Africa. On the basis of talks held then and on later correspondence, the overall theme of "How to build a human rights culture" was delineated and the ambition of working together around this theme grew stronger. Karin's idea on the part of Dalarna was that the western academic world needed to break out of its

1 Prof Marita Hilliges, Vice-Chancellor of Dalarna University, Sweden.

2 Dr Andrew Casson, Vice-Rector, Dalarna University, Sweden.

“westernised focus”; Sweden needed to look not only to Europe or the USA, but also to the so-called third world to expand its world view and also for new ideas to filter in and come through exchange.

As sometimes happens – but not often – the perfect avenue for funding appeared at just the right time when the Swedish Government through SIDA/Internationella programkontoret announced its major programme to support North–South academic exchanges, the Linnaeus Palme programme, after two of the greatest names in Swedish international collaboration during the past centuries. After planning trips, applications were sent in for a symposium on the chosen theme as well as a full exchange programme of academic staff and students between the Stellenbosch University (SU), the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and the Dalarna University (DU). In November 2002, the Symposium “Humanity in a Global Era” was held in Stellenbosch, involving 16 scholars, half of them from DU and half from SU and UWC, which resulted in the publication of a volume of essays and articles: *Building a Human Rights Culture. South African and Swedish Perspectives*, with Karin Sporre and H Russel Botman as editors. Its 333 pages formed an important background to almost a decade of exchanges between our universities.

Between 2002 and 2010, the exchange programme came to involve more than a hundred students and around fifty staff. The role of H Russel Botman as initiator in developing the “soul” of the exchange cannot be overestimated, even though both his and Karin Sporre’s roles in the direct running of the programme passed on to Ernst Conradie, Nico Koopman, Miranda Pillay and Gull Törengren. It was a very timely project where South–North, North–South ideas of global solidarity, the importance of human rights and democracy were developed and put into practice in an educational exchange. The students spent six months in a new country and culture and the staff in general, more or less a month. The influence on a personal level of this experience is not possible to estimate but the evaluations of students and staff almost unanimously testify to it having been, if not life-changing for all, still having been one of the best semesters of academic studies for the students – and a tremendous experience for teachers.

Although Russel had to relinquish direct participation in the exchange programme as his career at Stellenbosch took him to higher posts of responsibility and eventually to the very highest as rector and vice-chancellor, his ideas and the spirit that inspired so many of his colleagues and students, continued to fire enthusiasm for our joint work. In his contribution to the above-mentioned volume, “Human Dignity and Economic Globalization” (Sporre & Botman 2003), Russel set out the basic principles of his ideas for reconciliation and restoration of justice and human dignity in South Africa. “The quest for reconciliation in South Africa is crucial to the restoration of human dignity. Reconciliation requires also reparations to humiliated human beings. Reparations, however, call for intervention by governments” (ibid:21), he wrote there. He was afraid, with good cause, that economic globalisation would make it impossible for political institutions to set the social agendas and codes needed to restore justice and dignity. Influenced by the writings of Zygmunt Bauman, who had identified the “deconstruction of politics” in his *Globalization. The Human Consequences* (1998), Russel saw the major conflict as being between, on the one hand, the ethic of dignity and, on the other, the ethic of interests that dominates the global economic system. In the South African context, but not only there, Russel argued eloquently for the benefits of distributive justice, where a redistribution of the wealth of a country to repair the material losses of a victimised group takes ascendancy above the retributive justice we know so well, as it forms the basis of the predominant Western legal system. Restorative justice, he argued, turns victims into survivors and entails “a meeting of human beings both hurt, degraded and angry but willing to reach out to an element of mercy and grace in the human spirit” (Botman 2003:32). The parties agree that none will leave a conflict as sole winner but negotiate a settlement. In this way, Russel concludes his article, “Reconciliation becomes thus a public political reality” (ibid:33).

Thus both Russel’s incisive academic writing, his charismatic leadership and humble way of enthusing others and getting things moving, coupled with his passionate beliefs in the importance of restorative justice in furthering human rights and human dignity, inspired a decade of collaboration between our institutions and influenced and inspired many of our students and co-workers.

Foundations of trust and understanding had been laid between our institutions. In one way it was a coincidence that led to the next phase in Russel's influence on our university, but actually it was only yet another witness to the wide international reputation that Russel's work at Stellenbosch had already gained.

Shortly after Marita Hilliges was appointed vice-chancellor of Dalarna University in 2011, she met her counterpart at Newcastle University, UK, Chris Brink, who had been vice-chancellor at Stellenbosch before Russel and who had collaborated closely with Russel in the transformative work there that had led to the conception and implementation of the HOPE Project. Marita came back to Dalarna inspired by Chris's account of the work going on in Stellenbosch, led by their new VC, H Russel Botman. And that was a name many of us at Dalarna already knew and respected. So the only natural thing to do, for those of us who had met Russel and knew his capacity to inspire, was to invite him back to Dalarna to tell us more. Then in August 2012 Russel and his wife Beryl were able to enjoy late summer sunshine in Dalarna, not missing the opportunity to meet up with old friends and colleagues in Stockholm along the way. And it was during the space of a day of intense talks that Russel managed to fire the imagination of the whole management team of Dalarna University. On the second day he was able to meet vice-chancellors and senior representatives of four other Swedish universities. The way he spoke of his work at Stellenbosch and the ambitions he had formulated there, together with colleagues and students, not only to work towards academic excellence but also to be a driving force in understanding and above all changing the society, gave a powerful impetus to lively discussions about the roles of Swedish higher education in society. This meant acting forcefully at both local, regional and national levels. Stellenbosch, as we understood it, had been very much a part of the old establishment so not only could it influence the hearts and minds of thousands of young people each year, but a change in direction would also have an important symbolic influence.

So what was it in the HOPE Project that spoke so eloquently to the leaders of a Swedish university with such different conditions from those in South Africa? What was it we could learn? We believe it was above all the

genuine commitment and real hard work – and not just the well-meaning words we so often hear – that was so obviously being put into an agenda of change: the fact that a university could take upon itself not just to look at the surrounding world from on high and publish papers in high-ranking journals, but leave its ivory tower and work together with local people to create a better life and a better world. “From excellence to significance” was the watchword that Russel used and those words remained with us as a guiding light ever since.

Our university is not part of the Swedish Russell Group or Ivy League but has its roots rather as a working-class university, at the forefront of widening participation and committed to providing high-quality higher education to those who might normally be excluded by social or financial constraints. Both our research and our vocational degree programmes have been closely allied to local and regional development ever since our inception in the late 1970s and we were at a stage then when our identity and our mission needed to be more clearly formulated and the next phase defined in our development as a leader in the provision of higher education for all. The discourse in Swedish higher education as a whole had for some years been shifting away from ideals of widening participation and social engagement towards employability, profitability, competitive power in an international market, exclusivity and excellence in purely academic terms. The recurrent theme of the government then in power was that the former government had worked towards quantity and sacrificed quality along the way. Now the government would cut down numbers, it promised, making higher education more exclusive and thereby be able to improve quality. In the way that quality was then defined by the Swedish government and Parliament – the fact that they took it upon themselves to do so led to some raised eyebrows, not to say vociferous protests – it meant that purely internal academic indicators and measures were to be used. The focus was on adherence to traditional methods and theories within disciplines and little attention was paid to how much research or degree programmes collaborated with the world around them or how much, in the long run, they would manage to influence developments to help create a better society. Obviously, recognition of academic excellence is of prime importance TO what is still a young university and our whole organisation was geared to ensuring that we could live up to high standards.

And yet there was a widespread discontent and a feeling that something important was missing in our priorities. So when a different view of the role of academia appeared, from conditions so patently more challenging than those we had in Sweden, and when it was presented with such humility, humour and quietly voiced passion as it was by Russel Botman, it provided inspiration to us all. A five-year period in the strategic development of our university was also coming to a close at that time and we were discussing different routes for the future. This could never be a matter of doing more of the same; we needed to find new perspectives at home and abroad, to widen our horizons and find a firm basis for our future work that could inspire and guide our staff and students. So it was only natural that our first visit was to Stellenbosch, where Russel and his team gave generously of their time and their knowledge to help us find our own direction forward. And what we saw when a group of eight senior academic leaders from Dalarna converged on Stellenbosch in June 2013, was truly inspirational.

So what did we learn there and how could we transpose those lessons to what is a very different reality in Dalarna? Well, we learned that even an old and revered institution can think and act very differently from what would be expected. And if Stellenbosch can challenge the usual routes of academic development, we really ought to be able to as well. So we could say that Russel and his team had set a fine example of having the courage as an institution to take on all the traditionalists and no-sayers on all levels of the academic hierarchy. The paradigm of excellence is going to remain, but both within and beyond its confines we should have the courage to stand up for what we believe in and make a reality of our ambitions. We also learned not to bow too deeply to the utilitarian principles of modern university politics and management, where “if there’s no economic gain, no financial profit, then don’t do it,” is the baseline of how to run a university. The underlying principles and attitudes at Stellenbosch gave priority instead to humanitarian and societal development: how can we help people to have better access to clean water? How can we make good medical care available to large swathes of the population? How can we start making people realise that this planet’s resources are not infinite and the way we are using them at present is threatening the lives of our grandchildren? The Millennium Development Goals as laid down by the UN formed a backdrop to the work

done at Stellenbosch and so they could for us. But we could also see that Stellenbosch had taken an inclusive attitude towards the local community, showing us how global solutions can arise from small-scale local initiatives.

We also learned that transforming a university cannot be done by a decree from those at the top alone. It must include patient and time-consuming work collating the interests and commitment of all the stakeholders inside and outside the institution. Top-down must be supported by an even stronger bottom-up movement. And what we saw at Stellenbosch confirmed that a great number of the many projects that had been coupled to the HOPE Project had been in existence before, but had found new relevance through the prism of the Hope ideology. But in the end it also requires a leap, a major change that is visible to all and that, above all, is real, that makes things happen all over the university and that reverberates throughout society. With his tireless work together with various funding bodies all over the world, Russel proved the importance of speaking sincerely but very loud and clear to the world about what you're trying to do. The importance of planned communications and meeting the right people, we learned, could not be overestimated.

You have also got to show that change is happening and, by doing so, increase the impetus of changing the mental picture of what a university is for. If you can win the hearts and minds of an increasing proportion of your staff and students, making it possible and desirable to accomplish change, then the full creative power of hundreds, indeed thousands, of society's best prepared and best equipped citizens can be unleashed to bring about a better life for many and a better society for us all. And to be able to believe in the possibility of bringing such a change about, you need to see others doing it – which we were able to do as we moved through some of the many Hope initiatives: the rural clinical school, student leader development, food security, the TsamaHub with its iShacks and other sustainability initiatives, ultimately leading to improved life conditions and an increased possibility to live a life in human dignity.

These and many other impressions formed one of the important foundations of a two-year process at Dalarna to formulate a new vision for the future of our university. It has been a process involving all our co-workers and

many of our students, and not least the stakeholders in our region that we work with on both our research and our degree programmes: politicians, employers, local interest groups and many more. There is no doubt that the ethos of our new vision, “We create open pathways to knowledge for a good society”, would not have been the same without the inspiring work of Russel Botman and his colleagues at Stellenbosch. “We have tried to capture the very soul of the University in our many discussions while seeking to forge our vision,” the vice-chancellor writes in her foreword, “And in those discussions, we have also been able to formulate the values that we mean to stand for and live by.” One of those three core values that we mean to live by is courage. “We have the courage to pursue our well-founded convictions”, we write, and “We dare to tackle complex issues and contribute to solutions to major societal challenges”. If we are able to live up to that ambition, some of that courage will have come from Russel and from Stellenbosch.

We have also learnt that, to quote again from our vision, “Dalarna’s future is closely linked to developments worldwide; solutions to major social problems can grow out of local initiatives. Our task is to clarify those relationships and open up for innovative solutions.” And we clearly set out the basis for an on-going discussion, both within and outside the university about what constitutes a good society. We believe, we write, that “a good society must be based on

- the equal value of all human beings;
- the value and benefits of democracy and diversity;
- the empowerment and self-reliance of the individual;
- the economic and ecological sustainability of production and consumption; and
- the just distribution of world resources.

These are values and beliefs that will guide and inspire our work over the coming years. It is going to mean resolving many conflicts of interest if we are to make a reality of our proud ambitions. It is also going to mean a lot of hard work within the university and in collaboration with our external partners. For many of us, the example set by Russel will be a guiding light in that work.

The discussions initiated by Russel to bring together university leaders from a number of Swedish Universities (Gothenburg, Linnaeus, Malmö and Linköping) together with major African institutions in two intertwined networks (Hope@Africa and Hope International) will ensure that work to spread the ideology of the importance of universities in societal change on a global level will continue on a much broader front. Continued discussions will work to realise an international forum of universities concerned to further the ideals of the HOPE Project as conceived and realised by Russel Botman and his colleagues and students at Stellenbosch University. This will be yet another very concrete illustration of how a North–South paradigm of mutual learning can be achieved and how the legacy of H Russel Botman will continue to bring hope to us all.

HIGH-LEVEL DISCUSSION

Lanzerac, Stellenbosch, 31 October 2013

Prof Thabo Fako
Vice-Chancellor
University of Botswana

Prof Rwekaza Mukandala
Vice-Chancellor
University of Dar es Salaam

Dr Vincent Ssembatya
Director: Quality Assurance
Makerere University

Prof George Magoha
Vice-Chancellor
University of Nairobi

Mr Alois Fledersbacher
Registrar
University of Namibia

Prof Russel Botman
Rector and Vice-Chancellor
Stellenbosch University

Figure 1: Hope@Africa Project, High-level discussion,
Lanzerac, Stellenbosch, 31 October 2013

9. HOPE@AFRICA PROJECT

MS Tshehla¹

INTRODUCTION

Professor Hayman Russell Botman dedicated his first term of office to the tangible realisation of the important strategic positioning document by Stellenbosch University (SU), entitled *Strategic Framework for the Turn of the Century and Beyond* (SU 2000). In his view, this document signalled a new direction for SU wherein the University acknowledges its contribution to the injustices of the past and commits itself to appropriate redress and development initiatives of the country, continent and beyond. In his inaugural address for his second term as rector and vice-chancellor (Botman 2007), Prof Botman pointed out that the University faced the challenge of “relevance in the new South African context”. The challenge for the University was to find a way to move from “success” to “significance”. Within this context he proposed that SU follows a “Pedagogy of Hope”. His thinking was inspired by, amongst others, the work of Brazilian educator Prof Paulo Freire (Freire 2006a). Freire’s publications on the pedagogy of the oppressed and *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire 2006b) led to a global emphasis on a “critical pedagogy” within education, conveying the idea that education should play a role in changing the world for the better. In particular, Prof Botman said that “Paulo Freire argued that education should stimulate critical thinking and a critical consciousness. People should be empowered so that they may free themselves from oppression, poverty, injustice and the difficult task of living peacefully with former oppressors in a new situation”. Another favourite quote used by Prof Botman was from Chinese philosopher Zhuangzi (Master Chuang, 4th century BC), who once wrote: “If you plan for a year, sow a seed. If you plan for a decade, plant a tree. If you plan for a century, educate the people” (Botman 2010).

1 Prof MS Tshehla is Dean of Military Science, Saldanha Campus, Stellenbosch University.

Prof Botman, drawing his inspiration from these and other authors, became a strong proponent of the idea that science should drive Africa's development, and he subsequently became the inventor and driver of the prominent HOPE Project. This project was established in his first term as rector and vice-chancellor, which later, in his second term, evolved into the Hope International and Hope@Africa projects. Stellenbosch University's HOPE Project creates sustainable solutions to some of South Africa's and Africa's most pressing challenges. The Project is rooted in its three core functions – teaching and learning, research and community interaction – and showcases academic initiatives that serve human need. The challenge for the SU to move from success to significance in order to be of relevance to the people of South Africa and the African continent was a focal point of these projects. This vision was an embodiment of the HOPE Project, which was launched publically in 2010 with the following themes: the eradication of poverty and related conditions, and the promotion of human dignity and health, democracy and human rights, peace and security, as well as a sustainable environment and a competitive industry (Botman 2013a; SU 2012). He firmly believed in a science-for-society initiative through which SU can contribute to the eradication of poverty, promote human dignity and health, entrench democracy and human rights, strengthen peace and security, and balance a sustainable environment with a competitive industry. This was aimed at positioning the University to nurture academic networks and scholarship communities that span the continent and the global south across regional and language boundaries. This, he believed, will enhance the diversity of Africa's intellectual resources, stem the brain drain from Africa, and harness the continent's massive economic and social growth potential in coming decades. This would consolidate and build the knowledge base of the university's activities in the development space (Botman 2010, 2011). The focus of the Hope International and Hope@Africa projects, which were established in 2013, evolved from the success stories of the HOPE Project initiated in 2010. The overarching theme of the Hope International project was supporting and participating in sustainable academic networks that will contribute relevant knowledge for Africa's immense developmental potential in the decades to come. The Hope@Africa focused on building a dynamic civil society, focusing African intellectual capacity on uniquely African challenges in collaboration with other African-based universities (Botman 2013a, 2014).

The foundation for his visionary leadership paved a way for the creation of Stellenbosch University's Institutional Intent and Strategy 2013–2018 strategy plan, which was approved by the SU Council in April 2013 (SU 2013). The aim was to position SU as a leading institution in the 21st century by becoming more inclusive, innovative and future-oriented. This was facilitated through improving access to the University, maintaining the momentum of excellence and increasing the University's impact on society. These focal points will enable SU to turn the staff members and students into thought leaders of the future. He believed that in today's rapidly changing world with its comprehensive information networks, SU must keep pace with new ways of discovering, transferring and applying knowledge to the advantage of both staff members and students. The University not only focuses on the acquisition of knowledge but also the values that will help build a better society. He encouraged staff and students to constantly think creatively about social responsibility, sustainability and entrepreneurship. This also inculcate the notion of lifelong learning. To realise the full potential of higher education on the African continent, Prof Botman believed that we need critical knowledge partnerships for human development that will lead to the realisation of SU's Vision 2030. The vision is encapsulated as "Stellenbosch University is inclusive, innovative, and future focused: a place of discovery and excellence where both staff and students are thought leaders in advancing knowledge in the service of all stakeholders" (SU 2013).

ACADEMIC COLLABORATION IN AFRICA

Professor Botman indicated that the challenge for Africa is to translate the steady growth in the continent since the turn of the millennium into broad-based human development, and he believed that universities have a vital role to play. He highlighted that higher education generates, transfers and applies the knowledge required for development to take place. This growth for Africa was virtually undeterred by the global financial crisis, and there is widespread agreement that Africa's economies will continue performing well in the coming decade and beyond. The goal of Stellenbosch University's policy on international academic networking is to support and participate in sustainable academic networks that will contribute relevant knowledge to Africa's immense developmental potential in the decades

to come. To benefit from these current and future opportunities, SU will solidify its position as an African knowledge institution of choice. This will best be achieved with well-supported and well-coordinated academic networks incorporating public and private partners throughout the African continent. The overall aim of the SU policy is to capitalise on the enormous developmental potential of the continent. He believed that such cooperation must be characterised by critical inquiry (i.e. true development for all of Africa's inhabitants), well aligned with the MDG and subsequently the HOPE Project themes. Stellenbosch University will become known as an effective facilitator of national, intra-African and Africa-global networks, by encouraging African partners to join international partnerships with developed and developing countries elsewhere in the world (Botman 2013b).

Stellenbosch University has responded to global and local challenges by adapting hope as the leitmotif of the University's activities, which means that scientific knowledge is created, shared and used to the advantage of society in Africa and through interaction with the world within which the University becomes a global citizen. Using hope as the guiding principle, the University is led to ask critical questions about reality, to look at problems in a scientific manner and to use science to make a difference in Africa. In this way he firmly believed that the Hope@Africa project was a radical transforming concept for SU. He emphasised the fact that Hope as *leitmotif* does not only ask what SU wants to do, but also what SU is and how it positions itself at the turn of the century. In his perspective, creating hope is the reason why the university exists. The University endeavours to create the conditions that will ignite the imagination of scientists to solve problems in creative ways through basic and applied research and through multi-, inter- and trans-disciplinary academic activities. The three core academic functions of the University, namely scientific research, learning and teaching and expertise-based community interaction are integrated and used in the service of both the private and the public good. The University builds on its tradition of excellence in scientific work, but now with a greater focus on the world within which the University finds itself. It was within this framework that the University embarked on a global network under Prof Botman's leadership (Botman 2013b, 2014).

Collaboration within SU has played a crucial role in the creation of knowledge because it enhances the quality of research and improves its effectiveness. To date SU has (Botman 2013b:7; SU 2012) agreements in place with around 200 foreign universities. In Africa, SU runs 149 active projects in 37 African countries, involving 434 African collaborators (Botman 2013a; SU 2012). Meeting the challenges of higher education in Africa requires innovative approaches to collaboration in and with Africa. Traditional bilateral and multilateral agreements need to continue, but there is also a trend towards multiple-partner networks, often organised around joint programmes and themes with societal relevance. This creates a stronger position to ensure that the needs and expectations of Africa is articulated and represented by the Africans. It was through these initiatives that the high level meeting was organised at Lanzerac Stellenbosch wine estate on 31 October 2013. In this case the meeting was aimed at discussing and developing strategies within which SU could build capacity in Africa and equally learn from the African counterpart (see Figures 1 and 2).

In this meeting the current and future African University's academic partnership initiatives were discussed and the progress report was also tabled by all stakeholders. It is important to also note that the projects are so varied that one still needs to evaluate the impact of each initiative for each intended purpose (Botman 2014). Multilateral partnerships are therefore increasingly important, especially with partners elsewhere in Africa and the developing world. Important initiatives at SU include the NEPAD Water Network, PANGeA and the African Doctoral Academy, a proposed network in Agricultural Sciences, the Periperi U network, African Institute for Mathematical Sciences, a Public Health consortium and others. To date, most of these projects have a great impact on capacity building within Africa, such as the SU centre for HIV/AIDS, which still plays a pivotal role in the management of the pandemic in Africa. Some of the projects that yield a greater success in Africa are as follows.

AFRICAN INSTITUTE FOR MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES

The highly acclaimed African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS) was established in 2003 by, amongst others, the then dean of SU's Faculty of Science. It has since become a model of regional and continental

collaboration with three universities namely, University of Cape Town, Stellenbosch University and University of the Western Cape, providing administrative support and expertise to universities across the continent. The network is now growing with mathematical institutes being established in Senegal, Ghana, Ethiopia and recently in Tanzania. AIMS aims to develop talented young mathematicians from the African Continent.

PANGeA (Partnership for Africa's Next Generation of Academics)

The Partnership for Africa's Next Generation of Academics (PANGeA) originated from a meeting with the deans of humanities and social science faculties throughout Africa in Stellenbosch in 2006. Four years later, the network was formally launched with the universities of Botswana, Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), Makerere (Uganda), Malawi, Nairobi (Kenya) and Stellenbosch (South Africa) as founding members. The network's main aim is to promote Africa's next generation of academics and professionals by building and sustaining world class doctoral programmes and scholarly communities through academic partnerships and joint research supervision on the African continent. Since 2010, 76 PhD scholarship holders from partner institutions and elsewhere in Africa have enrolled through the Graduate School of SU's Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences in eight different research themes. Students and staff are supported by SU's African Doctoral Academy, which provides training in supervision, research methodology and academic management. In their first year at SU, doctoral candidates develop their research proposals. They then typically return to their home institution for a co-supervised research stay, followed by a third year of finalisation of their dissertation at SU. The opportunity for academic exchange and training of supervisors are also made available to staff members from partner institutions (Botman 2013b).

Figure 2: Founders of PANGeA

TRECCAfrica (Transdisciplinary Training for Resource Efficiency and Climate Change Adaptation in Africa)

The TRECCAfrica consortium, which stands for Transdisciplinary Training for Resource Efficiency and Climate Change Adaptation in Africa, is a network of six African universities – Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), Ghana, Mekelle (Ethiopia), Nairobi (Kenya), Nsukka (Nigeria) and Stellenbosch (South Africa). The scheme is focused on assisting the continent's sustainable development in addressing the twin challenges of climate change adaptation and natural resource depletion. It consist of mobility scholarships for 72 students and 8 staff members to cross national boundaries in Africa for transdisciplinary postgraduate research aimed at empowering the continent worst affected by global warming. In the past, funding used to be provided for students from Africa to attend universities in the developed nations of the global north. TRECCAfrica breaks the mould by allowing for mobility

between higher education institutions in different countries on our own continent. PhD and master's degree scholars study at the six partner universities whilst maintaining contact and aligning their research. Core staff members and doctoral candidates also get the opportunity to attend an annual Summer School on transdisciplinary research methodologies and competencies.

Periperi U (University network of Partners Enhancing Resilience for People Exposed to Risks)

Partners Enhancing Resilience for People Exposed to Risks (Periperi U) is a consortium of higher education institutions in Algeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda. It is the only one of its kind and focuses on providing an African response to disaster risk management. Founded in 2006, it seeks to challenge the notion of victimhood by investing in human capital through training and education. Periperi U now actively engages 71 academic professionals in ten countries working together as colleagues. This collective effort is practically reflected in the introduction of nine applied undergraduate and postgraduate programmes within Africa that are generating new applied disaster risk reduction professionals. Through bilateral and multilateral exchange visits, staff members from within the Periperi U consortium are able to attend short courses, which not only contributes to capacity development, but allows them to apply the knowledge they have acquired to the empowerment of their own communities. They also have the opportunity to liaise on curriculum development and co-teaching.

Through targeted institutional university agreements and support to multilateral academic partnerships, Stellenbosch has emerged as a key institution in south-south academic cooperation. It currently has exchange agreements (including funding support) with six universities in East, Southern and West Africa, with records of more than 200 individual African cooperations. This is in addition to the longstanding partnerships it has developed since the mid-1990s with partners in Europe, North America and Asia (Botman 2014; SU 2012, 2013). Figure 3 depicts the current bilateral agreement of the African Partners with the Stellenbosch University. Amongst other success stories is that of the Faculty of Military Science, eventually managed through the Hope@Africa project to establish

the School of Military Science at the University of Namibia (UNAM). The two institutions operate under the guidance of the two deans in both institutions, namely Prof F Gideon and Prof MS Tshehla. The Faculty of Military Science (SU) commenced with capacity building in the Faculty of Science at the University of Namibia. The School for Military Science was opened in January 2014 and the official opening by the President of Namibia is due soon.

Figure 3: Current African bilateral university partners

CONCLUSION

Professor Botman took a keen interest in Africa's development agenda and Africa became his focal point. He took advantage of the already existing SU projects in Africa. It is proven beyond doubt that most projects have yielded greater success in the continent. Projects such as ADA and others have seen a record number of PhDs awarded annually at Stellenbosch University to date. His everlasting legacy in the African continent still lives on and hopefully the current leadership will continue building on his foundation. Stellenbosch University, with correct strategic guidance, will grow from strength to strength. This is attested by the current Worldwide University ranking in which SU climbed up 88 places in the world. This indeed is

a testament to the hard work by Prof Botman to take the SU to greater heights and to position SU as a global academic institution.

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10. INTERACTION WITH AFRICAN COUNTERPARTS

Thabo T Fako¹

"The challenge for the University was to move from success to significance in order to be of relevance to the people of our country and continent."
(Hayman Russel Botman, 2007)

The University of Botswana's interaction with Prof H Russel Botman, the late rector and vice-chancellor of Stellenbosch University (SU), started in 2011 following a visit by me as vice-chancellor of the University of Botswana. Prof Botman was a world leader who had a vision for Africa and the world, a vision to contribute towards eradicating extreme poverty through education. This is a vision that is also espoused by the University of Botswana.

Prof Botman envisioned actualising his vision through his 'Pedagogy of Hope' that was launched in 2010. The HOPE Project was aligned to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) of *eradicating poverty and related conditions, the promotion of human dignity and health, democracy and human rights, peace and security, as well as a sustainable environment and a competitive industry*. The Project was adopted as a guiding principle in learning and teaching, research and community interaction, to make the University relevant to the community in which it resides.

Botman's vision was inspired by a strong economic growth that Africa experienced in recent years. Out of this growth, he envisioned Africa rising. He challenged other leaders to identify ways of enhancing economic growth in Africa and ways of ensuring sustainable development. These goals, according to him, could be realised by empowering the people of Africa so that they could fully participate in the global knowledge economy. Even then he noted that challenges remained in education, health, agriculture, security, governance and military as well as leadership. Notwithstanding these challenges, he challenged universities to work together towards ameliorating these challenges, which will in turn empower Africans and thus reduce

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poverty. In other words, Prof Botman inspired many to rise and tackle problems confronting Africa in order to liberate Africans from illiteracy and poverty. One way of achieving this was through the use of technology, Telematic Services and learning in order to reach more people at the same time. Botman used Stellenbosch University as an example of a university that utilises technology to facilitate learning and teaching, including life-long learning, and to empower communities through Telematic Services.

Noting the severity of challenges Africa faced, Botman encouraged universities to take advantage of the positive growth Africa was experiencing and translate it into broad-based human development. To this extent, universities will be playing a critical role in working towards the realisation of the MDG, which African countries embraced. Botman identified teacher training and professional development as a new challenge that universities had to deal with in order to achieve their objectives. This challenge was also noted by other international organisations such as the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) that noted that Africa required around 2 million teachers by 2015, and that a significant number of teachers were under-qualified or unqualified. According to him, it was critical that universities addressed this skills gap in order to realise the goal of knowledge-based economy. He observed that empowering the teachers was critical as they will train students, and thus empower Africa. He noted that a viable solution to this skills gap and building African expertise was to embrace the Internet and Communication Technology (ICT) to facilitate learning and teaching beyond the physical classroom. This, he argued, would facilitate sustainable networks and promote life-long learning. The use of ICT was critical and handy because first, teachers were spread throughout Africa. Second, the use of technology will ensure that teachers receive training without taking them away from their jobs and families thus minimising disruption.

This is the vision that the late Professor had and shared with others from African Universities. He was instrumental in organising a high-level summit held in October 2014 at Stellenbosch to discuss ways of increasing collaboration between higher-education partners on the continent. This culminated in a *Letter of Intent* signed by the University of Botswana, the University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), Makerere University (Uganda), the

University of Nairobi (Kenya), the University of Namibia, and Stellenbosch University (South Africa). The University of Malawi is also part of the initiative. His main dream throughout our interactions was his desire for each university, and universities as a collective, to believe in giving Hope to Africa and the world. In this way, universities would make themselves relevant.

Through the HOPE Project, which was set up at his university, Botman desired to create sustainable solutions to some of South Africa's and Africa's most pressing challenges. Interesting and most inspiring to those of us who interacted with him, were the basic tenets of the HOPE Project. The Project was based mostly on a three-pronged strategy of learning and teaching, research and community interaction. It was geared towards building a significant and relevant institution of excellence that a university is. This encouraged us to pay more attention to challenges facing our Universities as well as those of communities.

Botman's visionary leadership had an impact beyond his university and country. Most of us in the neighbouring universities in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) admired his optimism when he aspired to see the daughter or son of a farm worker studying at Stellenbosch University and in turn occupying a position of leadership. This is the vision and optimism that bestowed Prof Botman with integrity, dignity and rare leadership, among others, qualities that he earned, not just for himself, but also for the benefit of the African continent.

The University of Botswana intends to keep Prof Bosman's vision alive and to continue to grow and build on it by identifying key national issues and operational structures that would make the University relevant to people's lives. Among the areas of interest that the University of Botswana is inspired to take on (in order to enhance a culture of industriousness by improving work ethic), is the development of African expertise through research and the training of more doctoral students in indigenous knowledge systems, arts, culture, and the creative industries, and adopting Stellenbosch University's Telematic Learning and Teaching model to enhance life-long learning.

Funeral service.
Photo: SCPS

11. IN MEMORIAM – A RECTOR REMEMBERED

*Albert Grundlingh*¹

The days when academic leadership was safely ensconced in an ivory tower are long past. In the modern world, rectors of universities are just as much part of the wider community as they are part of the halls of learning. Concomitantly, leadership at the top level of universities has in itself become part of a growing field of scholarly research. This research reveals a series of salient characteristics of leadership which challenge the earlier assumptions of the hierarchical ways in which rectors were assumed to behave. Currently, it is argued that there is greater emphasis on the need to live with ambiguity, to be aware of contradictory realities, to appreciate individual differences, to assess problems even-handedly and still to be capable of taking firm decisions across a range of fields, including complex financial matters.

Research into leadership has mainly been conducted through questionnaires and interviews, but attention has also been drawn to the use of obituaries as possible sources of information. Of course, one can argue that obituaries are by their very nature inclined to be too fulsome in their praise and should therefore be used warily. But this material, however flawed, can also convey a revealing sense of the kind of values and concerns an academic community wishes to promote. As such, they can open up what has been called “a window on the occupational ethos of academic life”, or phrased differently, as an indication of the symbolic capital that the deceased has unwittingly accumulated.²

This line of thinking allows us to gain an interpretative foothold on the enormous number of tributes and other similar material which Botman’s untimely death elicited. This material, as well as newspaper reportage, has been preserved by staff associated with his office and constitutes a veritable

1 Prof Albert Grundlingh is a former Head of the History Department, Stellenbosch University.

2 B Macfarlane & RY Chan. 2014. ‘The last judgement: exploring intellectual leadership in higher education through academic obituaries’, *Studies in Higher Education* 39(2):296.

paper monument. The sheer volume of material is in itself an indication of Botman's reach and influence. This brief essay is a very condensed summation and interpretation of that material.

Particularly insightful is the high regard in which Botman was held by the wider university world. At the time of his death, he was vice-president of the governing board of the association of African universities. Botman, as a matter of fact, was scheduled for a meeting with this organisation in Ghana a few days before his death. News of his passing was a "complete shock" to the organisation and was seen as a "big blow to the entire fraternity". His counsel was to be missed, as well as his personal attributes: "He was such a gentleman, a man of few words but full of action."

Tributes, moreover, poured in from universities in Africa north of the Limpopo, China, Japan, the United States of America, several countries in continental Europe, the United Kingdom, and virtually every university in South Africa, including a message from the newly established Sol Plaatje University in Kimberley. All of these bore testimony to his leadership qualities, his visionary role for universities and his general role in the transformation of higher education which drew special praise from the Minister of Higher Education, Blade Nzimande. A phrase that was often repeated in these submissions was one that Botman coined and that reflected his emphasis on the need of access to university: "The daughter of the farmworker should have the same opportunities to come to Stellenbosch as the farmer's son." Botman's standing in the wider university world was underscored in that just before his death he was about to receive his second honorary doctorate from the University of Aberdeen. His wife, Beryl, then bravely undertook the trip to Scotland to receive the degree on his behalf.

Given Botman's background as a prominent theologian, it is not surprising that his death elicited responses from bodies such as the World Council of Churches, the World Commission of Reformed Churches, the South African Council of Churches, Anglican, Methodist, Moravian and Dutch Reformed Churches as well the Bible Society of South Africa. All paid homage to his excellent attributes and one message in particular emphasised his "Christian principles and convictions which stood out as examples of active faith".

Besides letters of condolences from captains of industry and a variety of organisations, other prominent individuals also paid tribute to him. These included President Jacob Zuma, former presidents FW de Klerk and Thabo Mbeki, Trevor Manuel, former Minister of Finance, the premier of the Western Cape, Helen Zille, the public protector, Thuli Madonsela and Botman's predecessor at Stellenbosch, Prof Chris Brink, as well as the mayor of Stellenbosch, Conrad Sidego.

From the public at large there was, likewise, a marked response. In expressing sympathy, some also wished to relate personal encounters they had had with Botman. Thus Hennie Rossouw, a former vice-rector in the 1980s, in a handwritten note fondly recalled how Botman himself graciously opened up the boom-gate at the parking lot when he and his son were stuck. This little act of consideration left Rossouw with a favourable impression of the rector's humility and sense of concern. Botman's common touch further resonated with Mrs Aubrey van Wijk, widow of Rev Attie van Wijk, a prominent Stellenbosch theologian. She remembered how Botman and his wife treated her as an elderly person with utmost respect and in doing so, helped her to maintain her sense of self-worth and kept her dignity intact.

What further emerges from these testimonies is the way in which Botman was able to engender a sense of identification with Stellenbosch University, which to some extent helped to transcend racial antipathies. On a symbolic level he was seen as a role model for the brown community of Stellenbosch and further afield. The fact that he achieved such a high ranking position was visible proof that an institution, which in earlier years only enrolled white people, had indeed changed. In terms of perceptions, the image of exclusion appeared to have given way to that of inclusion. His standing and subsequent passing was keenly felt in the community. Thus a letter to the local *Eikestadnuus* of 3 July 2014 spoke movingly of his involvement in the community and related his contribution in detail. In a similar mode, Lynne Brown, the Minister of Public Enterprises, emphasised what can best be described in terms of the politics of identity when she said: "Some people want to play down the fact that Russel was the first black rector of the SU, but for many of us it is important. We saw ourselves in him and we realised that that person in that position looks very much like I do."³

3 *Die Burger*, 4 July 2014 (translated).

While the outside world assigned its own meanings to Botman's career, he, of course, also had a domestic and family life which, for a set of very good reasons, few were privy to. One journalist though gave us a glimpse of his family environment when she recounted after his death an earlier interview she had conducted with him as an ordinary person: "A husband for his wife, a father for his children, but also a leader whom I respected for the soft way in which he spoke about his family, his early years and his people in Bloemfontein."⁴

Condolences soon after the death of a person do not usually touch on controversial matters. This was also, by and large, the case with tributes to Botman. Nevertheless, occasionally it transpires from the formally correct letters that a rector's position was not always a bed of roses. One sympathiser went slightly beyond the polite tone and mentioned that Botman as a gentle person must have been torn between what the author regarded as the contradictory forces impinging on the University: the demands of transformation, donors, staff and authorities. "He listened with grace," it was said, "and always acted with the best of intentions."

The very real issues which Botman had to grapple with during his term of office also surfaced soon after his death. Prof Jonathan Jansen, the outspoken rector of the University of the Free State, raised the issue of the kind of oppositional groupings Botman had had to contend with on campus and in the formal chambers of the University which he claimed contributed significantly to Botman's stress levels. Jansen's comments elicited strong denials.⁵ This is not the place to debate the veracity or otherwise of the different assertions, but it would be misleading not to mention them. At the same time, it illustrates that though death and mourning may momentarily suspend judgement, underlying issues cannot be suppressed for too long. Perhaps this was also, in an unintended and indirect way, a tribute to Botman that in death as in life he became the focal point of substantial and meaningful issues.

4 *Kuier*, 16 July 2014 (translated).

5 *City Press*, 6 July 2014. For a fuller exposition of Jansen's point of view, see J Jansen, *Leading for change: Race, intimacy and leadership on divided university campuses*. London: Routledge, 2016. 201–203.

Botman's official funeral on 5 July 2014, after an earlier memorial service at the University, took place in inclement Boland weather in a packed DF Malan Hall (ironically the name of the first National Party prime minister after 1948, which was soon after the funeral to give way to the more neutral "Coetzenburg Centre"). Dignitaries from far and wide attended the sombre occasion but the sermons and orations were replete with messages of hope. The solemn yet inspirational service was an apt farewell to a man who had moved from the dark days of apartheid to head an educational institution from which he was formerly officially excluded.

In addition to the official ceremony, there was a meeting in the Town Hall on 8 July where the local populace could convey their respect. At this meeting, the positioning of Stellenbosch University was under the spotlight and though advances were acknowledged, it was emphasised that there still remained much to be done and that in Botman's memory "fundamental change" should in future be actively promoted.⁶

In material terms, Botman's legacy lives on in the Russel Botman Bursary Fund and he also had a senior residence named after him, but it is rather in the intangible that his unique consideration can be discerned, namely his quest for meaningful and humane higher education in a fractured society. To these values, the paper monuments amply and eloquently testify. But perhaps the last words should be left to a newspaper which is not normally associated with highbrow academic readers. The *Son* newspaper, aimed at mainly brown working class readers and their everyday concerns but realising the gravity of Botman's passing, was on its best behaviour when it fittingly described Botman's role and the road ahead: "In his calm, soft spoken, deep spiritual and diplomatic way he brought various camps together and placed the emphasis on the right priorities for the university. In this respect his task was not yet completed."⁷

Botman's reputation did not diminish after his funeral. He was well remembered by the Convocation of the University – despite the fact that

6 Copy of a speech by Prof Julian Smith, 8 July 2014. (I am indebted to Prof Smith for kindly providing me with a transcript.)

7 *Son*, 29 June 2014 (translated).

he was often at loggerheads with this body – as well as the club of former student chairpersons and his alma mater, UWC, which honoured him with the Chancellor's Outstanding Alumnus Award. In addition, his memory is increasingly acknowledged in academic works dealing with tertiary education. Remembrance can be a fleeting phenomenon, even for luminaries in the higher echelons of public life. In Botman's case though, it is unlikely to happen as he had contributed to campus life and wider society in an indelible way.

Beryl Botman receives the honorary doctorate from the University of Aberdeen on behalf of Russel Botman, 2014.

12. EPILOGUE

*Beryl Botman*¹

If I have to describe Russel's life in short, I would do it as follows: he lived for the other, not for himself. He did not take himself too seriously, referred to himself and others with humility, but everything he took on in life, he did with great earnestness.

This piece is just a flight of thought, a few ideas to try to sketch how I thought and felt about him. In the previous chapters, Russel's life was taken under review by family, friends, colleagues, his students, employers and mentors. It clearly wasn't an easy task to divide him into categories or even eras. The reason: he was a fully-rounded person who tackled life with passion and worked with his infectious love of life and faith in a hopeful future for all people. To underline it, just to make sure, I also want to state the following or even state it again. I just want to make sure Russel is also remembered as a son, brother, grandson, cousin, uncle, son-in-law, father, father-in-law, grandfather, housekeeper, handyman, widower, husband and friend. I want to ensure that we pay homage to Russel as responsible, accommodating, inclusive, playful, participatory, systematic, hardworking, a life-long learner and a reader of note. We want to honour Russel for his creativity and artfulness, his care, love, generosity, hospitality and humility.

As firstborn of Karel and Mavis Botman (born Louw), Russel had a very special place in the family. You read about it in the first chapter. He was his mother's helper and co-manager, the carer, the one who had to accept responsibility. As the eldest child, he pleaded for the younger ones. As an adult, he also had to assist and guide his father to have his pension paid to him justly. In this regard, he had to have many telephone conversations with his father, helped him formulate his letters, and helped him to prepare for meetings and conversations. As an adult, he had to help his mother in her responsibilities as a widow. His relationship with his parents was very

1 Dr Beryl Botman, widow of Prof Russel Botman.

loving and also mutually respectful. His dad would easily address both of us in Afrikaans with a formal “u”.

He also took his responsibility as eldest brother seriously. During times of crisis in his sisters’ and brother’s lives, he was the one who gave advice and support. Whether it was help regarding threatening divorces, children who got out of hand, problems with employers, completion of studies, financial needs, compiling budgets, which cars to buy and which not to buy, stand surety for study loans – to mention just a few examples. This was how he lived throughout his life, also with his in-laws and his family. Because he read so widely and continued learning, he could give advice to nearly all of us. We didn’t always take his opinions and insights to heart, but that didn’t stop him. Especially when his father was diagnosed with diabetes, he read a lot and often shared his insights with him. What I do remember, is that all the advice and wisdom that he whared with his father, he himself followed when he was diagnosed with the same condition at about the same age as his dad was. He really valued his health and tried nearly everything to bring, and keep, his diabetes under control. It was well known that he shared and talked about issues regarding diabetes with those who had the same condition.

Of course he did not only give advice; he also searched for advice, especially from his parents. Except for a few other times during the week, he called his parents every Sunday evening and it was then that he sought his parents’ advice, experience and insight. They did not necessarily always agree on everything, but they could listen to one another. They could rely on each other’s support. This reminds me of his father’s last days. Russel and I were coincidentally both working in Gauteng that week when we saw Pappie (Daddy) on his feet for the last time. Shortly thereafter, Pappie had a stroke and died a few days later. During that week, Russel commuted between Johannesburg and Cape Town between his meetings, interviews and presentation. It was during that same week that Russel had to do an interview and presentation to the senate at Stellenbosch University for his application as Vice-Rector (Teaching). I remember that during his last visit to his dad he promised him that he will take care of Mammie (Mommy) and that he can let go, he can rest. That is just one example of how Russel could, during a crisis – family, university, South African Council of Churches,

handling an application for a position – remain calm and successfully see everything through.

Along with this there was his extraordinary ability to always make time for everyone. He made everyone feel special, that is why it took so long for him to walk from the entrance of his office building to his office: he walked up the stairs and down the corridor while greeting everyone he met on his way, asking them about their well-being and sharing a joke or two. He did this even after having to accommodate a call or two before leaving home. This, of course, elicited criticism. People often complained that he was always late, and the same people complained that he didn't make time for them. Of course he could not pay attention to everything and be where everyone expected him to be, but this meant that he was needed elsewhere. That is why he had to make sure what event people were referring to when someone asked him if he was back from Johannesburg or overseas. It was also not unusual that two or three trips had already followed the one the person was referring to. As a student, he had to attend full-time classes while at the same time fulfilling his job as teacher. As minister, he was a very popular speaker at national and international conferences and he adapted his schedule to ensure that he could preach on Sundays. He did not easily miss our family's birthdays – it would really be the exception for him to be travelling on one of our birthdays.

Making time for everyone was also a fulfilment of his strong sense of inclusivity. He had the ability to include us as family in his life. Everyone was included to share in the big moments of his life. Here are just a few examples: When his doctoral degree at UWC was conferred on him and when he delivered his professorial address at the SU, both his parents were there to share in these experiences. When he got the opportunity to spend six months at the Centre of Theological Inquiry in Princeton, USA, from the end of 1997 to the beginning of 1998 as research fellow, he took the family along and invited the whole extended family to come and visit. Some of them accepted the invitation, others could not. Veronica, Irvin and their daughters, Rochelle and Alicia, joined us over the Easter weekend. Together we all travelled to Atlanta where he had to appear. Later Ronde and her children, Lance and Megan, and a friend, Evan, also came to visit. On our way back to South Africa, our family visited Den Haag and London for a whole

month. Our children had the opportunity to attend school in Princeton and could also accompany us to Atlantic City, Washington DC, Philadelphia, Lancaster and New York City. In 2002, Russel worked in Geneva for several months as researcher at the then World Alliance of Reformed Churches and we were also included. This was shortly after his father had passed away and he also invited his mother along. We spent two wonderful weeks together. We explored the city while he worked. In his free time he also took us to new places and the jewels that he had discovered before.

He also made time for us as a family. He missed very few school meetings and was never absent at concerts or prize-givings. Family time was also play time. He was a good player who was a stickler for applying the rules. And when it came to applying the rules, he took responsibility for it. He wasn't so much a referee, but he was an excellent coach. You can't just play, you had to play correctly. You don't have to win, but you had to play correctly and fairly. He was actually a very good loser. He didn't have to win at all costs, didn't always have to be the best, wasn't really competitive, but participatory. Right up to his last days, we got together with some members of our extended family for our annual games evening. He was always great fun and made us roar with laughter. Russel, the great participant, always played along, whether it was table tennis, Swingball, Uno, tip cat ("kennetjie"), three cans, Trivial Pursuit, Pictionary or Wii and of course he always coached everyone. Because Russel had the ability to use his time very economically; he turned work-related events into family events, without making us feel "dragged along". His work as minister, lecturer, vice-rector and rector were always of such a nature that it included many social events. He attached great value to family time and as minister of a congregation, he was involved in congregational days, day-hiking trips and picnics, to mention but a few. That was how I experienced Russel – a "systems" person.

To live a methodical life doesn't happen by itself. It requires learning and learning to live. In Russel's life the word "learning" was pivotal. At school as learner and at university as student he distinguished himself, especially through his diligence. Along with learning he had learnt and applied the value of reading from an early stage in his life. He didn't just read words, but also the world. And boy, could he read! With all issues that he came across in life, one of the first things he would do, was to consult reading material to

help him think and understand. It was therefore not strange that he owned so many books and read so many newspapers and magazines. Therefore, it is probably also not strange that he served a number of years as non-executive director of Media24. And he didn't keep the things he discovered to himself. He liked to share his insights with all who wanted to listen. Whether it was world politics, investments or whatever else, he shared his insights.

I got to know Russel as a minister who never prepared a sermon, whether for the Sabbath or a prayer meeting, without reading. And then he used his insights so creatively. It is therefore also no wonder that Russel was the family's "residential" minister "of choice" at events like weddings and funerals. For example, he would already start preparing his Sunday sermon early on in the week – there actually never was a day that Russel was not busy with the preparations for the sermon in one way or another. He would jot down his thoughts on pieces of paper and cue cards. His favourite place to paste them was on the mirror. Each day, the sermon would grow and more reading and more thinking would happen. The thinking often went hand in hand with pacing and he often thought out loud. He therefore appreciated long corridors and space. That is why our homes in Gordon's Bay and Welgevonden were too small for him. However, the space provided by the big ocean in Gordon's Bay made up for the lack of space in the house. All the other houses where we lived provided him with the space to think, to read and to pace.

He read about everything that he took on or considered. For those of you who were wondering where he got his ideas from, the answer is that he read. It sometimes happened that people who were not familiar with Russel's ideas would dismiss them or tease him about it, only to later, after they have read about it themselves or traveled halfway around the world, admit that he was right. That is why many of Russel's ideas took a long time to germinate, but he was patient since he realised that he was dependent on other's insights to finally get the ideas executed. Sometimes people would only later discover a lot of literature on Russel's "silly ideas". With reading and research Russel developed new ideas and discovered best practice. His suggestions and his vision were never random. They were always based on reliable sources. And if there were conflicting sources, he made choices within specific circumstances.

The people who thought that he could speak so well “unprepared” and “from the heart”, so casually, don’t know that he had already thought about the subject and event and prepared for it. Sometimes he left his notes in his pocket when he delivered his speech or welcoming. But we have to admit, he was an exceptional speaker. I don’t blame those who thought that he could deliver an exceptional message or speech “unprepared” and “easily”. He appeared so relaxed! He could easily deviate from his prepared text but it definitely wasn’t “unprepared”, but because he was prepared he could read the situation and audience and adapt to it. In that, he was also a master, because his preparation was never complete until he delivered the speech. With his sermons and speeches on stages, on television, on the radio, in sitting rooms and conferences halls, he touched many lives. Nearly everywhere he went, at least one person came to him and reminded him of one or other sermon or speech of his. Sometimes it was years after the event.

Russel not only thought, read and spoke, but also listened. He would listen to others and listen and postpone his opinion. Especially in times of crisis, Russel listened and sometimes his silence made people uncomfortable. He could listen for a long time and when he finally spoke, he had the ability to sum up everything, use his insight to assess the situation or issue, and if it depended on him, make a decision or suggestion that appeared obvious and then proceed to “do the right thing.”

And for so many people Russel was also a good friend. To me, he was my best friend. Some of his long-term friendships lasted, while others did not. Some of his friendships stretched over decades and others took on a new form. Among other things, Russel’s friendship was described as valuable, unselfish and easy-going.

Russel was also very talented. Yes, he really was. He was a good chef who often cooked; at times he was the chef in the home and later he cooked every Friday. When he, as a widower, had to accept responsibility for all the cooking, he took cooking lessons, specifically for microwave dinners. He served the best scrambled eggs for us as family. The extended family also loved his potjiekos. As mentioned before, when he does something, he did it right. I remember when he prepared potjiekos for us at a picnic near Cape Point, strictly according to the recipe. Along with the pot, wood

and ingredients, he also took along the hardcover recipe book.² His other favourite recipes were from the book by Matie Brink.³

Russel was also (as already mentioned) very good with words, as demonstrated in the many poems that he wrote in Kroonstad, Johannesburg, Bellville, Wynberg, Gordon's Bay and "somewhere between Chicago and Amsterdam". With these poems he expressed deep insights, experiences and impressions. For example, he wrote poetry on the drought as he experienced it on a farm, Rooipos, where his paternal grandparents lived and worked. He also wrote about farewell, grieving, longing, pain, understanding God and struggling, about the several roles that he played and about the different loves in his life. There is no doubt about his creativity in dealing with the Word. He nearly always surprised our family and extended family during family events with a completely fresh view and understanding of otherwise well-known Scriptures. Each time we were challenged to examine our views and lives in ways we weren't used to. I remember several times that he served us with the word on a Sunday, Christmas Eve, Good Friday, Resurrection Sunday, weeknight, early morning at home, along the beach, in the garden. And then we couldn't just listen, we had to answer questions and take part in the interpretation and application. His artfulness really applied to many areas. He was the one who chose the paintings, the one who took care of the interior decorating and the one who wrote the most beautiful messages in cards.

Russel's leadership brought him into many spheres. At the Absa Klein Karoo National Arts Festival he first served as member of the board and later as chairperson. With this he was committed to the promotion of the arts. Everyone could join us at his invitation. Some could accept and others could not – but the invitation was made. Everyone was included; he liked to share what he had, which included events in particular. It was not only with celebrations that he liked to be inclusive; he also tried to provide opportunities to his colleagues from church or the University, especially to the youth and to women.

2 Sitole D & True Love Magazine, *Cooking from Cape to Cairo: A taste of Africa*, Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1999.

3 Brink M, *Entertaining with potjiekos*, Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 1986.

Russel cared particularly for widows. He always explained that this feeling intensified after the death of Lizzie, his first wife. He often said that he turned to the Bible in his time of mourning and sorrow, and sought guidance on being a widower. However, he came to the conclusion that society supported widowers “of their own accord” but that “the world rests heavily on the widows” and therefore more reference is made to widows than to widowers, if any. He also recalled this issue in a biographical television programme.

And then Russel couldn't be open-handed and inclusive without being hospitable. This is of course not unusual for someone who spent his entire life in a parsonage. This life started with him being the son of an evangelist, then, as teenager and student, he would spend holidays at the parsonage when banned or suspended, and thereafter he spent thirteen years in the parsonage as an adult – first with Lizzie and then with me. Everyone is welcome in a parsonage. This we continued in our home in Belhar. The house was open for his students and colleagues. I remember one specific occasion when he and a group of students of UWC went to Table Mountain in the early morning hours for a television recording that had to coincide with the sunrise and afterwards they all came home with him. He welcomed our children's friends as well as family and friends. Church people who came from far away for church meetings or events, for example Malawi, Zimbabwe, the Netherlands, Belgium and the USA, have stayed with us. This hospitality was also continued in his later career as vice-rector with among others an annual event with the deans of Stellenbosch University. Every year we also entertained the deans, but not necessarily at home. When he was appointed as rector, the annual celebration with the Student Council and one-time events with several groups were added. On occasion he also enjoyed receiving and serving the office staff at home, as he put it: “Now it is my turn to serve you the way you have served me the whole year.” These events took place at all the homes that I shared with him: Wynberg (Mission and Mortimer Road), Belhar, Gordon's Bay and Stellenbosch.

This is by no means the end of my thoughts about Russel or the end of the list of his many characteristics. So many others also experienced him as being loving, honest, dedicated, unselfish, humble, patient, compassionate, wise and respectful. Naturally, there were also those who experienced

Russel's wrath. After long deliberation, he would set boundaries, but always with the hope of reconciliation. He was no pushover. Patiently loving, but no pushover.

Russel's life and the realisation of his calling was indicative of a person who inspired so many. This is the one characteristic most noted by others – his inspiring nature, as also depicted in the entries in his sixtieth birthday book. He wanted to be an inspiration to his children. He wanted to inspire them to remain true to themselves, compete with themselves and always give their best. On his last Father's day, his children Roxanne, Ilse, Lizelle and Hayman, and grandchildren Haylen, Jayden and Byron could demonstrate their love and appreciation for him and could experience his love for them.

Nearly two years after his death, there are still people who share with me where they were and what they did when they found out about his death. It is usually followed by one or other story of where their paths had crossed or what other photo events they both attended. The *us person* may have left us on 28 June 2014, but hasn't left us abandoned.

Thank goodness for the special events provided to us on his twelfth, twenty-first, fiftieth and sixtieth birthdays to express gratitude towards him. We would have wanted to add so much more on his seventieth ... beloved *us person*, *Godly person*.

GALLERY

RECTOR

Prof Russel Botman welcomes the first-year students – an annual occasion.

Photo: Anton Jordaan

CHANCELLOR, COUNCIL CHAIRMAN, MANAGER

Prof Elize Botha, Prof Russel Botman and Dr Edwin Hertzog, 2007.

Photo: Anton Jordaan

Inauguration of Dr Frederik van Zyl Slabbert as Chancellor of the Stellenbosch University, 2008.

Photo: Anton Jordaan

HOPE PROJECT

Prof Russel Botman, Prof Jimmy Volmink (Dean of Medical and Health Sciences), Ms Helen Zille (Premier of the Western Cape) and Councillor Basil Kivedo (Executive Mayor of the Breedevalley Municipality) celebrate the opening of the Ukwanda facility, 2012.

Photo: Justin Alberts

HUMAN RIGHTS

Prof Sonia Human, Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng, Prof Sandra Liebenberg and Prof Russel Botman during a Human Rights lecture at the Law Faculty of the Stellenbosch University, 2013.

Photo: Anton Jordaan

ABROAD

Visitors from Hope@Africa and Hope International, mainly rectors from various universities, 2014.

Photo: Justin Alberts

NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, USA, 2012.

(Second from right is Dr Japie van Zyl, alumnus and honorary doctorate from SU.)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Desmond Tutu visits the Children's Hospital, 2008.

Mr John Abels, an ex-pupil of Lückhoff High School, shares memories with the rector, 2008.

Photo: Hennie Rudman

The rector participates in an HIV/AIDS awareness campaign, 2007.

Photo: SCPS

LEARNERS

Soccerplayers and Sod Turning ceremony at Lentelus, 2010.

Photo: Anton Jordaan

ACCOLADE

Receiving the 2013 Abraham Kuyper prize from the Princeton Theological Seminary, 2014.

THEOLOGY

150th Anniversary of the Faculty of Theology, 2009.

Photo: SCPS

YOUTH AND FAMILY

Above: Russel as a baby in Bloemfontein.

Right: Kliptown, during his high school days.
Next to Russel is his cousin, David Louw.

Back: Russel, Phebe, Grace, Ethne and Deon. *Front:* Mrs Mavis and Rev Karel Botman.

FAMILY MEMBERS RECEIVE DEGREES

Ilse Botman, BSc Forestry, 2008.

Roxanne Botman, BComm Hons (MHB), 2010.

SIXTIETH BIRTHDAY

Russel and family. *From left to right: Ilse, Beryl, Hayman, Russel, Roxanne and Lizelle.*

Photo: Anton Jordaan