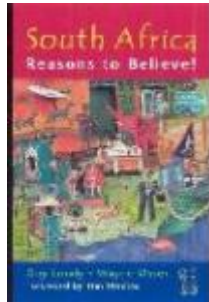


South Africa:

Reasons to Believe!

By Guy Lundy and Wayne Visser (Aardvark Press, 2003)



~ 8 TIMELESS ICONS ~

Historians of the future will not only be morbidly fascinated by South Africa's fascist apartheid experiment, they will also be positively inspired by the remarkable lives of numerous legendary personalities of the 20th and 21st century that were forged in the fires of this country. The unique environment that makes South Africa what it is has ensured that the country has been blessed not only with Nobel Peace Prize winners but also with inspirational leaders who will be remembered for centuries for their contributions to our great country and for the example that they set from which we and the rest of the world can learn.

Living in South Africa today, we tend to take these political, philosophical and moral giants for granted. We fail to fully comprehend that the world will be guided by the ideas and values of great leaders like Shaka, Cecil Rhodes, Paul Kruger, Louis Botha, Robert Sobukwe, Steve Biko, Chris Hani, and others for generations to come [Are we sure these people are all role models? Are there no women?]. In this chapter, we pay fleeting tribute to just six among many of these timeless icons, namely Mahatma Gandhi, Jan Smuts, Albert Luthuli, Desmond Tutu, FW De Klerk and Nelson Mandela.

Mahatma Gandhi

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi – more affectionately known by his honorary title 'Mahatma', which means 'Great Soul' – is one of those iconic individuals whose political and moral influence towers over the landscape of the 20th century. His life was a powerful testimony to the revolutionary practice of peaceful resistance and to the spiritual philosophy of non-violence. Many of Gandhi's ideas, including his 'satyagraha' method (which means literally 'holding to the truth'), were first conceived and tested in South Africa, in the two decades he spent here after arriving as a newly qualified lawyer in 1893.

In fact, in later years, Gandhi paid this country a great tribute by saying "I was born in India but made in South Africa" and that "it was after I went to South Africa that I became what I am now. My love for South Africa and my concern for her problems are no less than for India." Recalling how his campaign of non-violent resistance to racial injustice began when he was thrown off of a train in Pietermaritzburg for daring to sit in a first class coach, Gandhi said: "I was afraid for my very life... What was my duty, I asked myself. Should I go back to India, or should I go forward, with God as my helper, and face whatever was in store for me? I decided to stay and suffer. My active non-violence began from that date."

Gandhi went on to establish the first anti-colonial political organisation in the country, if not in the world, founding the Natal Indian Congress in 1894. Gandhi's satyagraha campaign of defiance against the South African authorities began in earnest in 1907 and reached its climax in 1913 with the epic march of 5 000 workers indentured on the coal mines of Natal. It was during this time (in 1910) that Count Leo Tolstoy wrote to him from Russia that his activity in the Transvaal "is the most essential work now being done in the world, and in which... all the world will undoubtedly take part."

Gandhi's thinking and actions undoubtedly helped to shape the liberation struggle in South Africa that continued for almost 80 years after his return to India in 1915. In fact, Gandhi and John Dube, first President of the African National Congress, were neighbours in Inanda, and each influenced the other. Both men, for instance, established at about the same time two monuments to human development within a stone's throw of each other, the Ohlange Institute and the Phoenix Settlement. Furthermore, both the African People's Organisation (APO) and the ANC were established during Gandhi's most active period of political resistance in South Africa.

Summing up his life's mission, Gandhi once said "if we look into the future, is it not a heritage we have to leave to posterity, that all the different races commingle and produce a civilisation that perhaps the world has not yet seen?" And then, in 1939, almost prophetically, "I am hoping that some day from among the youths born in South Africa a person will rise who will stand up for the rights of his countrymen domiciled there, and make the vindication of those rights his life's mission."

When Nelson Mandela became South Africa's first democratically elected president, it was the realisation of Gandhi's hope for South Africa. And as Mandela began during his first term of office as to inspire the nation to take up the challenging task of building that very civilization of which Gandhi had spoken, he paid tribute in turn to the role that Gandhi had played in South Africa's emancipation:

"Gandhi's magnificent example of personal sacrifice and dedication in the face of oppression was one of his many legacies to our country and to the world. He showed us that it was necessary to brave imprisonment if truth and justice were to triumph over evil. The values of tolerance, mutual respect and unity for which he stood and acted had a profound influence on our liberation movement, and on my own thinking. They inspire us today in our efforts of reconciliation and nation-building. That legacy extends to methods of struggle and mobilisation for social change. As our people were the agents of their own liberation, defying oppression and deprivation, they are now critical to the programme of reconstruction and development, both as beneficiary and driving force."

Mandela even went as far as to say that "the Gandhian philosophy may be a key to human survival in the twenty-first century." It is ironic that Gandhi, this grandfather of the peace movement, was never awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, despite being nominated in 1937, 1938, 1939, 1947 and, finally, a few days before he was murdered, in January 1948. Nevertheless, we can be proud that Gandhi's legacy lives on in the world, through his challenging ideas, his profound philosophies and, most visibly, through South Africa's successful transformation itself. The reciprocal influences of Gandhi on South Africa and vice versa are explored in more detail in the book *Gandhiji's Vision Of A Free South Africa: A Collection Of Articles*, compiled by E.S. Reddy.

Jan Smuts

Some may be surprised at the inclusion of Jan Christiaan Smuts, former Prime Minister of South Africa, as one of our timeless icons. His heavy handed command-and-control political style was certainly not beyond reproach, as his clashes with Gandhi demonstrated

on several occasions. Nevertheless, his political achievements, both in South Africa and on the international stage, should not be ignored. Also, lest we forget, it was only when he lost the 1948 election to the conservative Nationalist Party that the era of institutionalised apartheid truly began. More than his remarkable political career, however, it is his scientific and philosophical contribution that places him firmly in the league of 20th century personalities that left a lasting legacy.

As far as Smuts' political achievements, he was a soldier and statesman who was twice Prime Minister of South Africa (1919-1924 and 1939-1948). He fought in the Second Anglo-Boer War (1901-1902), but by 1904 concluded that the cooperation of Boer and British elements was essential to realise the greatness of South Africa. To this end, Smuts was instrumental in the creation of the Union of South Africa in 1910. Having gained international repute during World War I, he was appointed a member of the Imperial War Cabinet in London and helped draft the League of Nations covenant, which was the first attempt to create a multilateral organisation that would help secure world peace. And although he signed the Treaty of Versailles, he protested (prophetically) that its terms would outrage Germany and prevent the harmonious world order that he believed could best be served by the League of Nations. Smuts was also active in gathering support for Britain and leading South Africa's efforts in World War II, during which he became a trusted confidant of Winston Churchill. Following on from his work with the League of Nations, Smuts was charged with drafting the preamble of the United Nations Charter, which was to succeed the League of Nations. We believe it is worth quoting the text here and remembering that these are largely the words of Smuts:

"We the peoples of the United Nations determined:

- to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and
- to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and
- to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and
- to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

And for these ends:

- to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and
- to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and
- to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and
- to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples,

Have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims:

Accordingly, our respective Governments, through representatives assembled in the city of San Francisco, who have exhibited their full powers found to be in good and due form, have agreed to the present Charter of the United Nations and do hereby establish an international organization to be known as the United Nations. (26 June 1945)."

Reflecting on the task of the United Nations, and reflecting his own broader vision for a better world order, Smuts had this to say: "Without feeding on illusions, without nursing

the impossible, there is yet much in the common life of the people which can be remedied, much unnecessary inequality and privilege to be levelled away, much commonsense opportunity to be erected as the common birthright and public atmosphere – for all to enjoy as of right. Health, housing, education, decent social amenities, provision against avoidable insecurities – all these simple goods and much more can be provided for all, and thus a common higher level of life be achieved for all. As between the nations, a new spirit of human solidarity can be cultivated, and economic conditions can be built up which will strike at the root causes of war, and thus lay deeper foundations for world peace. With honesty and sincerity on our part it is possible to make basic reforms both for national and international life which will give mankind a new chance of survival and of progress. Let this programme, by no means too ambitious, be our task, and let us now already, even in the midst of war, begin to prepare for it.”

In addition to his important political role in attempting to unify South Africa and to lay the platform for a more stable and equitable post-war world, Smuts’ was a brilliant scholar who graduated in science, literature and law and wrote the important scientific and philosophical treatise *Holism and Evolution* (1926). Synthesising Darwin’s theory of evolution, Einstein’s theory of relativity and his own thinking, Smuts coined the term ‘holism’ to describe how the driving force behind evolution is the formation of ever more complex and comprehensive integrations, or wholes. He cited considerable scientific evidence of this holistic principle at work, from the formation of inorganic chemical compounds, through various biological levels (plant, animal, human), to human personality and organisation within society.

In the preface to his book, Smuts says, “it is my belief that holism and the holistic point of view will prove important in their bearings on some of the main problems of science and philosophy, ethics, art and allied subjects ... [and] how it affects the higher spiritual interests of mankind.” This proved prophetic indeed, since the theory of holism described all the elements of what later became known as general systems theory, or systems thinking, which is applied today in disciplines ranging from astronomy, physics, biology and medicine, to economics, management, psychology and spirituality. In fact, an internet search on ‘holism’ gets more than 30 000 hits, and ‘holistic’ more than 1.2 million. Hence, through the United Nations and his theory of holism, we believe Smuts has left a real legacy for the improvement of the lot of humankind.

Albert Luthuli

Unfortunately, while Jan Smuts did a great deal to mend fences between Afrikaners and English, and to work towards peace on an international level, he did not work hard enough towards promoting democracy for all South Africans. As a result, black, Asian and coloured people in South Africa still had to fight passionately for their basic rights. It was into this environment that Albert John Luthuli, the first South African to win the Nobel Peace Prize, was born in 1898 and was exposed to the racism and tribalism against which he was to spend the majority of his life fighting.

First and foremost, Albert Luthuli had a strong Christian belief in fairness, equality and dignity, and it was these beliefs that guided his thinking. But being a Christian did not mean that he was by definition a pacifist. He was more of the school that believed in forcing out the bad and replacing it with the good, such as in the parable of throwing the moneylenders out of the temple. He was a lay preacher for many years, and he became chairman of the South African Board of the Congregationalist Church of America, president of the Natal Mission Conference, and an executive member of the Christian Council of South Africa. In 1938 he was a delegate to the International Missionary Conference in Madras, India, and in 1948 he spent nine months on a lecture tour of the United States.

Luthuli followed a rule of 'sacrificial service', meaning that he was prepared to sacrifice his own comfort in the service of his fellow people. This is precisely what he did when he gave up his job as a teacher at Adam's College in Natal in 1936, where he was one of only two black teachers, to become the democratically elected chief of his 5000-strong tribe for a significantly lower salary. He held this position until 1952, when the apartheid government removed him from office by banning traditional leaders from being involved in politics. Chief Luthuli had become increasingly involved in the ANC since joining the organisation in 1945, after having been exposed more and more to the very real issues of landlessness and lack of basic rights for his people, and he had been elected Provincial President of the organisation in Natal in 1951. Once deposed from his chieftainship by the government, he was elected to the position of President-General of the ANC in 1952.

Luthuli was almost immediately banned by the government and forced to restrict his movements to the Lower Tugela area for the next two years. The ban was renewed for five years every five years after that, right up until his death in 1967. This meant that if he was to attend ANC meetings legally within the periods of his bans, they would have to take place within 20 miles of his home. Despite his restricted movements, he was nonetheless arrested along with 155 other leaders of virtually every existing anti-apartheid movement in the country in 1956 and charged with high treason. The Treason Trial lasted for four years, until all the accused were found not guilty in March 1961.

In spite of the harassment that he was personally subjected to and the obvious injustices carried out on the majority of South Africans, Chief Luthuli never faltered in his belief that the ANC should not become a violent movement. While he stated that anyone who thought he was a pacifist should try to steal his chickens, he believed that a policy of non-violent struggle against apartheid was more effective in gaining the support of most South Africans and the rest of the world, as well as averting a potential civil war in the country. It was this stance that earned him international recognition and the Nobel Peace Prize in 1960. The government only allowed him a passport to travel to Oslo to accept the prize on condition that he did not get involved in any political campaigning. Nevertheless, his name still appeared on human rights petitions presented to the UN, the students of Glasgow University voted him to be their rector, the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) made him their honorary president, and he was nominated for president of the South African Colored People's Congress.

It was only later, when it became clear that the Nationalist government did not see a problem with their apartheid policies and was therefore not interested in talking about a solution, that Luthuli accepted that some measure of targeted violence against state institutions, like army installations, was necessary. He believed, though, that this should be accomplished through a military movement separate from the ANC, which was ultimately the case when Umkhonto we Sizwe was established by Nelson Mandela.

Albert Luthuli was recognised as an intelligent and eloquent leader, with forward-thinking ideas and an unflinching commitment to non-racialism. He rejected the idea that democracy was impossible in a country as heterogeneous as South Africa, stating in a speech in Johannesburg during the Treason Trial in 1958: "I personally believe that here in South Africa, with all our diversities of colour and race, we will show the world a new pattern of democracy. I think there is a challenge to us in South Africa to set a new example for the world. We can build a homogenous South Africa on the basis not of colour but of human values."

Let us never forget these prophetic words, and let us keep working towards a South Africa with all the promise that Chief Albert Luthuli recognized in it.

Desmond Tutu

Desmond Mpilo Tutu is one of those remarkable individuals who is recognised in South Africa and by the world as being one of the outstanding pragmatic visionaries of the 20th century, a spiritual leader who has helped to regenerate the moral fibre of our modern society. Born in Klerksdorp and educated as a teacher, he went on to study for the ministry and become the first black Dean at the Cathedral in Johannesburg in 1975. He was consecrated Bishop of Lesotho in 1976 and became General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches in 1978.

What distinguished Tutu, however, was not so much his rise through the ranks of the Anglican Church, but rather his uncompromising and vocal stand against apartheid. He constantly sought to be the voice of reason and warning in a highly volatile political environment, as the following quotation reminds us: "I myself have said times without number that I am opposed to all forms of violence, that of those who wish to uphold the vicious and unjust and totally immoral and evil system of apartheid and of those who want to overthrow that system... I have said many times before that this institutionalised structural violence of South Africa is making many blacks desperate as they despair of peaceful change, for until 1960 since 1912 their political groups have struggled valiantly to bring about change by peaceful means. But what has been the result? A growing intransigence on the part of the authorities, replying with teargas, police dogs, police bullets and death; an escalating violence that has shut out the possibility of peaceful negotiation... Many blacks have despaired of peaceful change. I have warned that when people become desperate, then they will use desperate methods."

Not surprisingly, these views did not win him any favour with the reigning political leaders. In 1980, the government even confiscated his passport in reprisal for his call for an international boycott of South African coal. Nevertheless, in 1984 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, in recognition of his non-violent anti-apartheid campaign. He proceeded to establish the Southern African Refugee Scholarship Fund with his Nobel Peace Prize Fund, enabling disadvantaged students to further their studies. Tutu's commitment to creating a free and democratic South Africa intensified as he became Bishop of Johannesburg in 1985, and Archbishop of Cape Town and head of the Anglican Church in Southern Africa in 1986.

When the first democratic elections eventually happened in 1994, he was elated and coined the now famous 'rainbow nation' and 'the rainbow people of God' to describe the new South Africa. At the same time, he was able to put the challenge that lay ahead into its proper perspective, saying: "To build a nation we must do more than slip a ballot paper into a box. Black consciousness has not yet completed its work. We need to draw on its strengths and assert our self-worth, behaving as people who are confident in ourselves and in our nation. We need to recapture ubuntu, that gift Africans have for the world which says that a person can be a person only through other persons. If we recognise our own self-worth, we will respect the worth of others and have reverence for life."

After retiring as Archbishop in 1996, Tutu became Chairperson of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, and presided over the traumatic revelation of the political crimes against humanity committed during the apartheid era. The heart-wrenching image of him weeping with grief and emotional exhaustion during the hearings is a haunting reminder of the horrors that this country and its people have witnessed. Explaining the value of the TRC, he expressed the hope that "by opening wounds to cleanse them, [it] will thereby stop them from festering. We cannot be facile and say bygones will be bygones, because they will not be bygones and will return to haunt us. True reconciliation is never cheap, for it is based on forgiveness which is costly.

Forgiveness in turn depends on repentance, which has to be based on an acknowledgement of what was done wrong, and therefore on disclosure of the truth. You cannot forgive what you do not know."

A steady flow of tributes to Tutu, including honorary degrees and prizes, pour in annually and will no doubt continue to do so for generations to come. Former US President Bill Clinton praises him as "a leader in both struggle and reconciliation [who] reminds us that the search for justice begins in the heart," while Mandela claims that Tutu's voice will always be the voice of the voiceless. US Reverend David du Plantier from Ohio reflects that "no other living Anglican has so captured the imagination of the world and set hearts on fire, with his intense faith, acute wit and powerful manifestation of God's love." Compilations of his sermons, speeches and reflections, like *No Future Without Forgiveness* and *The Rainbow People of God*, are a source of deep inspiration and considerable wisdom. Through his positive yet pragmatic spirit, Tutu is a living symbol of the hopes and prayers of many in the world that it is indeed possible to move beyond hatred and revenge to forgiveness and celebration of our common humanity.

FW de Klerk

FW de Klerk was born into a political family. His father and his grandfather were both cabinet ministers, while his brother, Willem, is a liberal newspaperman and one of the founders of the Democratic Party. He entered politics himself as the National Party MP for Vereeniging in 1972, turning down an offer of a professorship in administrative law at Potchefstroom University (where he had earlier achieved an LLB degree cum laude).

With a long history in the National Party, De Klerk was not known for advocating reform. He had served as a minister in various portfolios under John Vorster and PW Botha, and while serving as Minister of National Education and Planning from 1984 to 1989, he had supported the racial segregation of universities, trying to keep black students out of white universities. Therefore, despite his being a centrist within the National Party and leading moves against the extreme right wing in 1982, no-one really expected him to be any different to his predecessors when he became President in September 1989.

De Klerk was a visionary Afrikaner leader, however, in that he clearly understood that apartheid was in its death throws. He recognised that the only way to move South Africa into a peaceful future was through dialogue, and he had the wherewithal to lead his political colleagues and the rest of the country into a new dawn. As Nelson Mandela described it in his book, *Long Walk to Freedom*, "He was not an ideologue but a pragmatist, a man who saw change as necessary and inevitable."

In his first speech after becoming leader of the National Party in February 1989, De Klerk called for a non-racial South Africa and for negotiations about the future. In his inaugural speech as State President he stated that his government was committed to peace and would negotiate with any other group with a similar commitment. On 15 October 1989 he ensured the unconditional release of Walter Sisulu and seven other former Robben Island prisoners. It was clear that he was totally committed to changing the status quo at a staggering pace, and as everyone now knows, in his first opening of parliament address on 2 February 1990 he announced the unbanning of the ANC and all other banned organisations, as well as the unconditional release of political prisoners jailed for non-violent activities. He effectively changed the country overnight. On 11 February, Nelson Mandela walked free from Victor Verster prison in Paarl after almost 28 years behind bars.

During the negotiations between 1990 and 1994 De Klerk showed that Mandela was right about him being a pragmatist and not an ideologue by proving to be a very tough political negotiator in his determination to protect minority rights in the new South Africa. He was

accused of not doing enough to quell the political violence that took place over the same period, which was later proven to have been stoked up by elements within the security forces, using it as a negotiating tool. However, he never wavered in his commitment to making a concrete and permanent change in South Africa. When the National Party lost a by-election in Potchefstroom in 1992 to the Conservative Party he decided to call a referendum of all whites to vote on negotiations and reform. 69% of the vote went in favour of the government's reform process and we marched on with negotiations towards a new South Africa characterised, in De Klerk's words, by "justice, freedom and equality for all". It was this commitment to peaceful change that earned FW de Klerk the French Prix du Courage Internationale and a joint UNESCO Houphouet-Boigny Peace Prize in 1992, the Philadelphia Liberty Medal in 1993, and, along with Nelson Mandela, the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize. In making their award, the Nobel Committee pointed out that these two leaders had looked "ahead to South African reconciliation instead of back at the deep wounds of the past," and that the peaceful end of apartheid "points the way to the peaceful resolution of similar deep-rooted conflicts elsewhere in the world."

After the first democratic elections in April 1994, FW de Klerk became Executive Deputy President until the National Party withdrew from the government of national unity in June 1996. He retired from active politics in 1997 and has since started the FW de Klerk Foundation, which aims to continue working towards peace and prosperity in South Africa and other societies divided by culture, ethnicity, race or language.

He, along with the majority of South Africans, has not looked back for a moment since helping to lead South Africa towards freedom and democracy for all, and recently he has been speaking out in support of the need to be positive about the country. He wrote in *The Citizen* in May 2002 "I was a very privileged person in the old South Africa. However, despite the many problems that we confront, I far prefer being a private citizen in the new South Africa – based on justice and with an enormously promising and exciting future – than being President in an old South Africa that could not grant justice to the majority of its people and that had no future whatsoever. And yes, I remain unashamedly positive about South Africa." Hear, hear!

Nelson Mandela

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela is the embodiment of the choice to have a positive attitude, which we spoke about in the introduction to this book. Despite decades of persecution and imprisonment, he never allowed his attitude to become pessimistic, negative or, most importantly, bitter or vengeful. Instead he stuck to his principles, learning constantly and developing the strength and wisdom for which he is now world-renowned.

Madiba (the name of his clan) had an education that was truly Afro-European. After his father, who was chief counsellor to Thembuland's acting paramount chief, died, Rolihlahla (his given, African name, which means "pulling the branch of a tree" or more colloquially "troublemaker") was brought up in the household of the Thembu chief, Jongintaba. There he was groomed to become an advisor to the chief himself. He was soon sent off to a Methodist school, Clarkebury (where he was given his English name, Nelson), then Healdtown High School and later Fort Hare and Wits University. In these institutions he developed not only his lifelong passion for education and learning, as well as a love of classical European culture such as Shakespeare and Tchaikovsky, but also the self-discipline that characterises his lifestyle.

Mandela's passion for learning continued while he was imprisoned on Robben Island, which became like a campus for political prisoners. Whenever they could, the prisoners would debate intellectual issues, and later they would help each other out in their studies through the University of South Africa (UNISA). Mandela himself completed his law degree by

correspondence through UNISA and London University during those years. He never stopped learning about people, either, always scoping out his captors and trying to work out what made them tick. In this way he developed a deeper understanding of the Afrikaner mindset that helped tremendously in the later negotiations with government, and which helped him develop the spirit of reconciliation which he displayed after his release. This love of observing, learning and wisdom help to explain why one of the few things that Mandela is happy to have named after him is schools, as well as the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund, to which he pledged one-third of his salary as President for five years.

He is a man of strict principles, as he showed in his world famous speech from the dock during the Rivonia trial in 1963: "I have fought against white domination and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die." When the apartheid government offered him his freedom during the 1970s if he agreed to recognise the independence of the Transkei and settle there, he refused because it would legitimise the Bantustan policy. When they again offered to release him in the 1980s if he agreed to renounce violence, he refused again, saying "Prisoners cannot enter into contracts. Only free men can negotiate." He had always seen violence against state targets as a sad but necessary consequence of the situation created by apartheid, because "the Government had left us no other choice," and shortly after his release from prison he announced on behalf of the ANC leadership the suspension of the armed struggle.

This man of such great wisdom and humility, who has given up the large majority of his life to the struggle for the freedom of all South Africans, was in many ways the successor to Mahatma Gandhi, another lawyer who made it his life's work to fight for non-racialism and the betterment of his people. It is therefore fitting that Nelson Mandela was awarded the Gandhi/King Award for Non-violence in 1999 and The International Gandhi Peace Prize in 2001. These, and a host of other awards, have been added to his joint Nobel Peace Prize with FW de Klerk, as well as honorary degrees from more than 50 international institutions of higher learning.

As a strong proponent of ubuntu, Mandela has done more to bring the people of this country together since the end of apartheid than anyone else, giving one of the most memorable displays of nation-building ever when he wore his Springbok rugby jersey and hugged Francois Pienaar when South Africa won the Rugby World Cup. He has also done more than anyone else to raise South Africa's profile on the world stage, and his wisdom is recognised and respected in the most hallowed halls. When he publicly chastises George Bush junior for his sabre rattling and calls his father to discuss his behaviour, people do not laugh, they pay attention.

While we hope that South Africa won't need any more shining examples of reconciliation in the future, we sincerely believe that the lessons learnt from the visionary leaders that the country has produced will move us towards a very bright future and we hope that there will be many more, possibly still to be born, who will be shaped by the unique South African environment to become renowned and respected around the world.