



UBUNTU – THE PEOPLE’S CONTRACT

CIVIL SOCIETY CALL FOR A NATIONAL UBUNTU DAY TO BE DECLARED

An idea whose time has come

“What if?” “What if all the people of South-Africa adopted the idea of Ubuntu?” When everyone dares to say: “Ubuntu, I am because we are. We are all one,” how easy will it still be to harm another person, one-self, an animal, and nature? What if we found more and more ways to make this idea workable? What if the ultimate answer is always for the greater good of all?

This proposal is a call to make official that which has guided, inspired, and united us for thousands of years; that which is called for from countless speech podiums, written about in many books, and celebrated and expressed in many beautiful and inspiring ways.

Although we undoubtedly have made huge strides since 1994, most of us seem to agree and know in our hearts that much remains to be done if we really wanted to create the South-Africa we have all been dreaming of, that far too many have battled and died for, and that far too many continue to do so every day.

The time has come for us to instead of talk about the ‘New South-Africa’, and the ‘Rainbow Nation’, to **seriously** start questioning what this really means.... How does it work, and what does it take? More than talking about it, the time has come to seriously start doing something about it; one by one. The time has come for ordinary citizens to reclaim their power and realize that freedom is equal to responsibility. What we see today is what we have created collectively. The time has come for us to stand up and say: “Peace and Freedom begins with me. I will go first.”

The eyes of the world have often been on South-Africa and it continues to be so. Africa and the world have looked at us for our wisdom and the answers to racism and other manifestations of separate-thinking, poverty, good governance and democracy, leadership, health and natural epidemics, moral deterioration, violence and corruption, etc., etc. Africa and the world have been looking at us in expectation and anticipation for hope, vision, deliverance, and liberation.

Apart from our local problems, we also know that we live in an unprecedented time globally in which humanity has attained exceptional powers to affect, control, and, indeed, fundamentally change the world. We know that we can easily destroy the world as we know it, or co-create a world of immeasurable possibilities.

We face many seemingly overwhelming problems: dire poverty, insane wars, environmental catastrophe, climate change, religious prejudice, racism, greedy business and economic melt-downs, nuclear threat, AIDS, endemic stress, etc., not to mention existential meaninglessness.

And we remain sharply focused on doing the many things that we think need to be done to solve these problems, whilst these do not appear to have had much of an effect over thousands of years.

We continue to feel overwhelmed and pessimistic, and we know we do not want things as they are. But we do not really have the answer, nor do we know where we are going, or how to get there.

And maybe because we have followed so many visions of a new world in the past that have not worked, we have lost confidence, and come to accept that we are defeated and that a workable answer does not exist.

Is it possible that a solution to all our problems really exists? Is there one pivotal idea that truly inspires and moves people to action, unleashes our ingenuity and, can end war, save the environment, eradicate poverty, show us who we really are, free us from selfishness, make us happy, let us bathe in the wonder of the moment, make us love our enemies, create genuine community, and inspire us to create a better tomorrow?

And is this idea one that all people can own and express in their own unique and cultural way? That can make them proud and add to their sense of identity; make them feel that they belong to one big local and global human and cosmic family?

It does seem that the world is beginning to awaken to an idea that holds enormous potential and that is said to have been part of being human and of life since the beginning. Here in South-Africa, and definitely also elsewhere, many have come to realize that all of life is an inter-related, inter-connected and inter-dependent whole. Indeed, science says it is true. We may say that our problems arise from our ignorance of this unifying idea that clearly illustrates that everything and everyone relates, is connected, and depends on something else; that nothing exists in a vacuum or stands alone, and that everything exists because of something else.

This idea is the idea of Ubuntu whose origins are found in our ancient Ethiopian history and culture. It is an idea that is becoming more and more appealing amongst South-African and global thought leadership, in spite of its apparent local devaluation that may be as a result of urbanization and industrialization, and because of the overuse/abuse of the term. It is evident that its universality, wholeness, and comprehensiveness are beginning to resonate with more and more people here and all over the world.

There are as many definitions/explanations for Ubuntu with the most common being; *Umuntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu. I am because we are.*

This definition can be explained in many ways, but looking at it deeply, the golden thread that binds all of life is clear to see: What is done to the one is done to the other. Or what happens for/to the one eventually has an effect on another. This includes the environment, and all of life. Through this expression and the idea of the inter-relatedness, inter-dependence and inter-connectedness of all of life, nothing is left out and everything is considered and respected. We are all One. According to ancient Zulu, Ntu refers to the unifying infinite cosmic order.

It is clear thus that Ubuntu deals with more than our humanness. It also has a religious/spiritual connotation that speaks to the human being's existence in relation to the whole of his environment; here and beyond this life, respecting those who have come before. It speaks to where we come from and where we are going, how we define our-self, and what our purpose in life is. This cosmic experience is referred to as Umthetho (the Law). It is the culture of being one with all of life, and reaching one's full potential (reaching heights of excellence – 'umuntu ngumuntu' (AbeNguni).

Apart from Ubuntu being known for its humanitarian ethic, it is also very well known for the values and principles that it upholds and which originate from the original forty two Ma'at principles dating back some 1 500 years.

According to its history, the (good, pure) heart of the person worthy of eternal life was said to be as light as a feather, and this person would have followed the principles of Ma'at to reach his full potential and heights of excellence.

These and other very important aspects of Ubuntu, as well as the fact that South-Africa is regarded as the Cradle of Mankind, support the call for a National Ubuntu Day so that at last, Ubuntu is understood and made alive more and more.

The ancient idea of Ubuntu (also referred to as our oneness) complements perfectly the findings of modern physics, which shows how life is a unified whole with multiple dimensions, each complementing the other, and which demonstrates how quantum particles in one part of our cosmos commune with other particles vast distances away. These findings defy our common-sense ideas that things are separated by time and space and conclude that all of life evolved from a "singularity" through a spectacular burst of creativity.

There are certainly many questions around what Ubuntu (our oneness) really is; its origin and universality, who it belongs to, and if indeed, Ubuntu and oneness are the same thing. It may be that we will never sort this argument out; possibly not in our life-time at least.

Instead of trying to establish what is "true," let us rather ask, "What if?" "What if all the people of our country and the world adopted this idea?" When everyone dares to say: "Ubuntu, We Are All One," how easy will it still be to harm another person, one-self, an animal, and nature? What if we found more and more ways to make this idea workable?

Here in South-Africa the desire for Ubuntu to be awakened is expressed on a daily basis by those who have come to know it's true value. How Ubuntu makes an impact is portrayed in many stories and documentaries, projects and initiatives, and countless books have been written about it. More and more Ubuntu organisations are established. It is applied in many fields, including business, health, education, spirituality, and others. It is said to be the 'national philosophy of South-Africa,' and it is the core focus of the National Heritage Council. Many see it as the answer to humanity's surmounting and continuing problems, and many are dreaming of how this idea can contribute to the developing and globalizing world.

This growing desire and outcry for Ubuntu/oneness, reflecting who we really are, has brought us to the point where there is no other way than to stand up and announce our natural impulse to belong, to be in community, to be happy, to care and to share. To see and realize that what is done to one is done to another. The time has come to stand up and announce our common human existence, which is tied up with the whole of the cosmos.

There is no walk to freedom and peace without shouldering the responsibility of this freedom which means:

- taking responsibility for one's life and life as a whole.
- the discovery of truth about oneself and one's potential.
- becoming all one was created to be.
- protecting the freedom of others and acting responsibly on behalf of others.
- unrestricted, uninhibited access to pursue the specific area of one's gifts and talents.

Appreciation, respect, and commitment for our freedom calls for consciousness and demands one to walk out of one's own self-imposed prison doors, into the responsibility of one's unique contribution, to create a true 'New South-Africa' and a 'Rainbow Nation.' To make South Africa a Winning Nation.

The time has come for each and every person to realize that: "If it is to be, it is up to me." The time has come for each and every citizen to realize that a miracle lies in waiting when we start working together as one, for the greater good of all. This miracle would be an example for the world to follow.

All big ideas are simple. Ubuntu is a simple, big idea. It asserts that the common ground of our humanity is greater and more enduring than the differences that divide us. It is so, and it must be so, because we share the same fateful human condition. We are creatures of blood and bone, idealism and suffering. Though we differ across cultures and faiths, and though history has divided rich from poor, free from un-free, powerful from powerless and race from race, we are still all branches on the same tree of humanity. (Nelson Mandela, in Khoza 2006)

ABOUT HUMANITY'S TEAM

Humanity's Team is a spiritual movement whose purpose it is *to awaken the world* to the sacred belief and ancient truth that we are all one -- one with God and one with life, in a shared global state of being -- so that humanity's behavior may shift to reflect this understanding.

Dubbed "a civil rights movement for the soul," the movement has some 400 000 adherents from more than 90 countries on six continents.

On a global level Humanity's Team was formed early 2004 by Steve Farrell, the (still current) worldwide coordinating director. Subsequently, country coordinators around the world established, and continue to establish local structures that reflect their own local cultural preference of bringing our purpose statement to life. Many countries from all over the world today make up the Global Council, which continues to build and strengthen the governance structure guiding Humanity's Team today.

Humanity's Team proposes a worldview that enlarges and enhances humanity's beliefs about life in ways that could change how we live with each other; bringing peace and harmony to our planet at last.

Humanity's Team's core principle is: We Are All One and it operates from the premise: Be the Change You Wish to See in the World.

Humanity's Team boasts a cultural diversity declaration: - *"I commit to increasing my consciousness of cultural diversity, within my own country as well as around the world, so that my Humanity's Team work and that of my teammates reflect this consciousness. This consciousness includes respect for cultural differences such as language, dress and traditions, the ways societies organize themselves, their values and religions, and the ways they interact with the environment."* This supports the desire of every person/idea/perception to be acknowledged and respected for its uniqueness whilst realizing that this uniqueness forms part of a greater whole.

This declaration supports Humanity's Team South-Africa's approach to combine the concepts of ubuntu and oneness, which it has been doing through all of its local communication and projects since the beginning. Humanity's Team South-Africa has already staged two successful international oneness/ubuntu events; the first on the 15th of April 2007 at UNISA ("Around the World in Oneness") when Dr Mathole Motshekga delivered a speech; "Oneness Through the Eye of Ubuntu," and the last on the 18th April 2009 at Freedom Park ("Oneness Summit 2009... *Awakening the Spirit of*

Ubuntu") when Humanity's Team presented its Spiritual Leadership Award to Archbishop Desmond Tutu who is also respected as a proponent of Ubuntu.

Humanity's Team SA believes that ubuntu which is something (an energy/spirit) that has always been inherently part of being alive, of the cosmos, life itself, and of being human, is our cultural expression of oneness, and also the oldest example of this philosophy on earth with South-Africa being the cradle of mankind. Ubuntu is indeed our human birthright that we need to be reminded of.

Humanity's Team SA that was started in 2005 focuses on raising the consciousness of oneness/ubuntu through all we do and communicate – also through our Whole in One Golf Day.

Humanity's Team SA also played a leading role in putting together a global Oneness Day Petition to the United Nations to get a global Oneness Day declared. Our first appointment with the United Nations is on the 20th May 2010 in New York when we will present 50 000 signatures that we will have collected by then.

It is Humanity's Team SA's dream that South-Africa and Africa will show the way in getting a global oneness day declared. We believe that South-Africa has a unique opportunity – indeed, we believe that it is an opportunity whose time has truly come to bring to the world the concept of ubuntu; a concept that the world has been waiting for -; an ancient African idea that the world desperately wants and will embrace universally.

And because ubuntu includes one and the other (all and everything), it is important to consider that it is not a prerequisite for a person to follow a specific belief-system to follow the underlying workable principles. Ubuntu is found in every culture and is all subsequent ancient teachings.

Anna-Mari Pieterse

National Coordinator Humanity's Team South-Africa