

FOUNDATIONS WALK

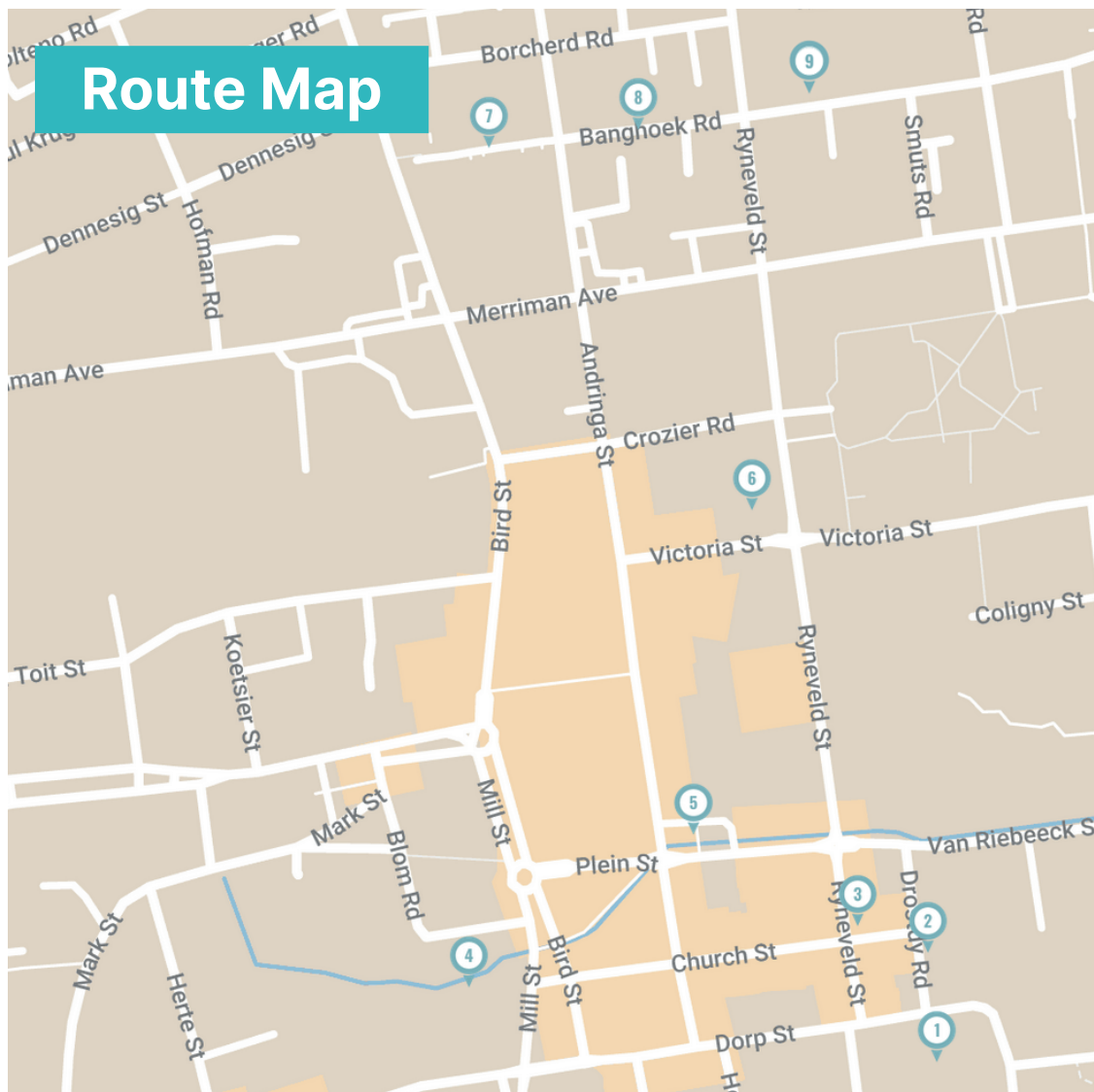


Exploring the Church's foundations
in Stellenbosch and South Africa



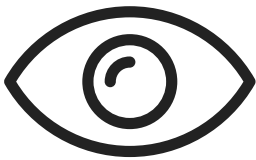
SUGGESTED ITINERARY

- 01** Drostdy & Faculty of Theology
- 02** Moederkerk
- 03** Bletterman House
- 04** Die Braak & Rhenish Church
- 05** Town Hall
- 06** Old Main Building
- 07** Stellenbosch Mosque
- 08** Christ Church
- 09** Old Lückhoff School



GUIDED REFLECTION

This walk through history is intended to stir your heart and mind. You may feel inspired, informed, upset, unsettled, or any range of emotions as you go on this journey. Do not rush through your thoughts and feelings. Be prepared to sit in discomfort. Ask God to guide you through this process. We encourage you to journal your thoughts at the back of this booklet, and/or process your experience with your fellow pilgrims as you move between locations. When you see the symbols below throughout the booklet, use the following information to help guide your reflection.



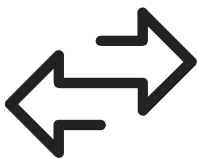
When you see this symbol, reflect on what facts you observed at this location. Some questions to consider include:

- What were your observations?
- What made this location stand out?
- What parts felt challenging, exciting, or unexpected?



When you see this symbol, reflect on the impact this location made on you. Some questions to consider include:

- What were you thinking about?
- How did this location make you feel, and why?
- Did anything surprise you about this location?



When you see this symbol, begin to reflect how to move forward based on your experiences during this journey. Do not rush to action. Take time to continue observing, reflecting, learning, and asking God, "Now What?" Some questions to consider include:

- What are some key takeaways from this experience?
- What might the root causes be of some emotions you experienced today?
- How might what you have learned impact your day to day life going forward?

Stellenbosch Timeline

Dutch settlers arrive in the Cape, establish a fort, and start efforts to expropriate land from indigenous peoples.

1652



1677

2nd Dutch-Khoi war ends with removal of Cochoqua Tribe from Drakenstein valley; land cleared for Dutch farms.

On 8 November the Dutch Governor Simon van der Stel camps at the site of the present day Faculty of Theology, and envisions establishment of a new town.

1679



1710

A Great Fire destroys most of Stellenbosch village, including the Drostdy and original Moederkerk.

The first Theological Seminary opened its doors in Stellenbosch on 1 November.

1859



1866

Stellenbosch Gymnasium (now Paul Roos Gymnasium) established to provide foundational training for seminary students.

Stellenbosch Gymnasium becomes Stellenbosch College and Public School.

1880



Stellenbosch Timeline



1886

Stellenbosch College's new home (now the Old Main Building) opens; renamed Victoria College in 1887 to honour Queen's Jubilee.

Victoria College becomes Stellenbosch University thanks to financial support from Jan Marais of Coetzenburg.

1918



1940

Battle of Andringa Street breaks between White university students and Coloured residents of Die Vlakte, escalating racial tensions in Stellenbosch.

Kayamandi township established to house Black workers for Stellenbosch area businesses.

1941



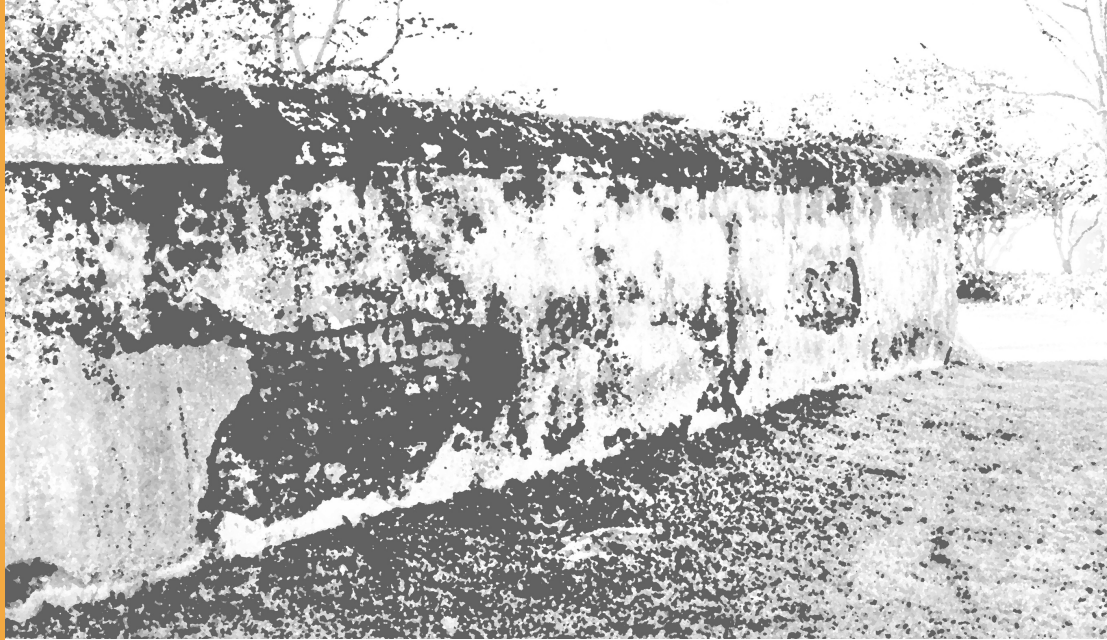
1964

Residents of Die Vlakte forcibly removed under the Group Areas Act, most residents were relocated to Idas Valley or Cloetesville.

Church Archives built at the Stellenbosch University Theology Faculty to chronicle the church's role in South African history.

2004



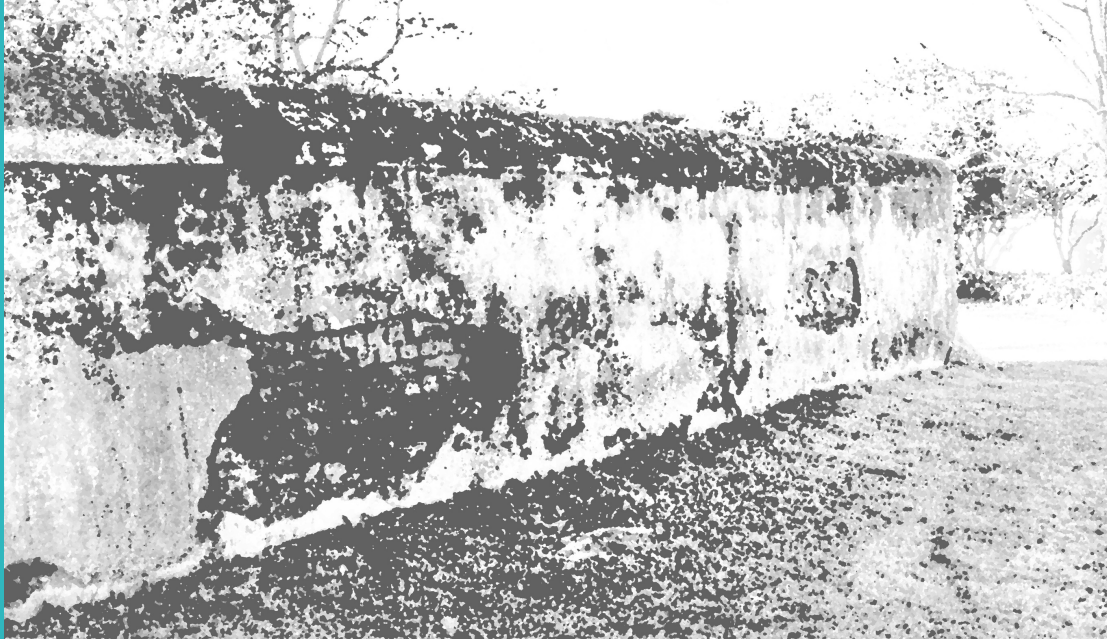


In 1652 the Dutch East India Company (VOC) arrived in Table Bay under the leadership of Jan Van Riebeeck, a shrewd merchant for the VOC who had been removed from his post in Indonesia because of corruption. Instead of being sentenced to jail, he was sent to establish the fort that would later expand to become Cape Town. The VOC had already been using Table Bay for decades as a stopover for their trade route with the Far East. Europeans, as well as Chinese, had already been trading with local people for over 150 years. His writings show that Van Riebeeck viewed indigenous people as beasts and savages; he led the first efforts to expropriate land from locals without compensation as the Europeans soon wanted more land for their expanding settlement.

On 8 November, 1679 Simon van der Stel came to this area on behalf of the VOC looking for prime land. His group camped on a small island surrounded by sparkling streams and beautiful tall trees, the site of the present Faculty of Theology. The outpost of Stellenbosch was soon established here, and in 1685 Commissioner Van Reede of the VOC had a Drostdy built on this location to serve as the office and official residence of a Landdrost (magistrate) in the Cape.

Through armed conflicts, the VOC took land from the Cochoqua Tribe and other indigenous people around the Cape, setting in motion centuries of ethnic cleansing and forced removals. For Europeans it was a decisive step of expansion following the Papal Bull of 1493, which stated that any land not inhabited by Christians was available to be "discovered," claimed, and exploited by Christian rulers. It also declared that "the Catholic faith and the Christian religion be exalted and be everywhere increased and spread, that the health of souls be cared for and that barbarous nations be overthrown and brought to the faith itself." The VOC was an economic venture by the Protestant Dutch government to break Catholic Spain's monopoly on trade.





Old wall behind the Faculty of Theology

Where do you start a pilgrimage? Is it the route, the destination, the different stations along the way? Or do we start with a focus on our companions who walk with us? These are all good and important. Maybe a healthier departure point may be to unpack the suitcase of your heart. To get in touch with the longing of your heart.

#Reflect for a moment: What do you long for? For our country and her people? For your culture? For yourself?

#Prayer: Share these longings with God in your own words/way.

From Ownership to Stewardship

A number of free slaves had been living and farming in this area before that Simon van der Stel decided to establish a town here; and a number of Khoi-Khoi tribes had been living in this valley long before people from Central Africa, Europe, and even places like Malaysia and China arrived at the southern point of Africa. The battle for land (wealth), power and ownership is as old as humankind. Psalm 24 suggests a different mind-set and posture when it comes to ownership and the claims we want to make: "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters."

A thought: When Jesus sent out the 72 followers in Luke 10, he commissioned them with the words: "Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road." In other words, be vulnerable, go without power, rank, control and be determined/focused. Go with an open heart, an open mind and an open will. Go with open hands, but go with a distinct goal in mind - to seek shalom/wholeness.





Throughout its time in charge of the Cape Colony, the VOC employed Dutch Reformed Church (NGK) ministers; most VOC employees were NGK members. The British took control of the Cape in 1795, and the office of the magistrate was abolished in 1827. In 1848 the tall Norfolk pine was planted by Mrs. Van Ryneveld, wife of the last magistrate of Stellenbosch.

The first theological seminary was later built on this site because the NGK wanted to train ministers locally; it opened its doors in 1859 with only 4 students. In 1866 a high school offering Latin and Greek was required to prepare students for studying theology, so Stellenbosche Gymnasium (now the Paul Roos Gymnasium) was established. In 1870 a 2nd building for the theological seminary opened, and in 1905 a 3rd building opened with the current façade. Students of colour were not officially permitted here until 1978; most recent stats show that less than 50% of students are non-White.

The two men featured together on the monument near the front gate are John Murray and Nicolaas Hofmeyer, the first two professors at the seminary. John and his brother Andrew were Scottish ministers who immigrated to work for the NGK; both had a big impact on the South African church. Hofmeyer also served as a minister at the Moederkerk, and was married to one of the Murray sisters. They were all involved with starting Paul Roos and Bloemhof Meisieskool.

The other statue is of Johannes du Plessis, a theology professor and missionary who traveled extensively in Africa. Although he was a leading figure in the NGK, and a proponent of unity among churches, he was eventually forced out of his teaching position at the seminary because many considered his views to be too liberal.

From this spot Stellenbosch was birthed; racism, land expropriation, and exploitation of labour are woven into its foundations. Much abuse and injustice has been perpetrated in the name of the church. Yet much good has also been done here: people trained in the Gospel, and missionaries equipped who have had a profound impact across Africa.





Faculty of Theology

A guide dog becomes a puppet (skoothondjie)

There is great irony in the fact that the first Drostdy became the Faculty of Theology. The Drostdy was the home of law and order, giving guidance for public life. Over the years, theology was supposed to be the guide dog, the sage, the conscience of the ruling powers. Yet the guide dog became a puppet (skoothondjie) of the ruling party or powers.

When we stand here we realise we have a rich theological heritage, but also a theology that is sometimes tamed by the culture of the day. Our theology reminds us that we are to be priests who serve and heal, as well as prophets that protest and confront according to the will and movement of God. Our theology (what we know and believe about God) guides our identity, ideas, actions and words.

Prayer: We pray together that all theologians trained in this faculty will be both priests and prophets. We pray for ourselves, that our belief in God and His kingdom will be our guide, even in difficult situations and contexts. We pray that our discipleship will influence our citizenship and not the other way around.





The Stellenbosch Moederkerk, or “Mother Church,” is the second oldest Dutch Reformed Church (NGK) congregation in South Africa. The church was originally built in 1686 two blocks away where Oude Werf Hotel is now located. The great fire of 1710 destroyed that building, so the church eventually moved to this site in 1723. Initially White and non-White believers worshipped together, however in 1857 the Synod ruled in favour of segregation. The Synod stated that they did not want White members to feel “uncomfortable,” and they wanted non-White South Africans to have their own place of worship where they would not feel alienated and could have membership. Eventually separate races were divided into separate congregations. Segregation in church conveyed the idea of division and separation being acceptable in society.

Prior to the 1920’s most NGK ministers stayed away from politics, however ministers started taking up political roles and influencing politics, which in turn linked the church directly to the actions of the National Party’s Apartheid government. The church held great power and influence during the Apartheid era, it shaped the norms and values of the government at the time. The church often used religious doctrine to enforce and justify Apartheid legislation.

In the 1930’s the NGK started adopting more extreme ideologies designed to protect the Afrikaner identity by preventing racial mixing. DF Malan (Prime Minister from 1948 - 1954) left church ministry to start the first Nationalist Newspaper “Die Burger,” and to organise the National Party in the Cape.

The NGK has often been stigmatised due its association with the Apartheid regime. “We are not proud of certain aspects of our history in this church,” said minister Richard van Wyk, “but we cannot simply erase this history.” Stellenbosch Moederkerk does a great deal of work with local communities, including Kayamandi and Cloeteville, serving the marginalized and supporting people groups disadvantaged by the legacy of Apartheid policies. The Moederkerk is closely connected to Stelumthombo, an NGO which is committed to early childhood development.





The church as Mother

John Calvin said that if God is our Father then the church is our mother. A mother who births, nourish, protects, transforms and sends. On our walk today, this church building serves as a symbol of all Christian communities in South Africa. She reminds us of the humanness and the wrongs of the church; but we are also reminded of her struggle against the darkness. The members of this church, as with all other followers of Christ, "are continuously being transformed into the image of God with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." (2 Cor 3:18)

May this church remind us of the transformation we need, that we will always need to be open enough to test our ways and to surrender to the work and guidance of the Spirit in every new context that we live in. May the church embrace you as a mother who sacrifices herself for the life of her children; who wants the best for her children; who is a space where children can be vulnerable, can find guidance and receive a loving prompt to be who they were meant to be.

#Walk around the church and look at the colourful windows contemplating the following idea:

It is strange that stained-glass-window-pictures do not really make much sense from the outside. When you are on the inside of the building, you will witness the most beautiful artwork of light and God's story. From this, we can construct three ideas:

- [1] Maybe it is only from the inside that you will get the true picture of any congregation or church - so do not judge from the outside.
- [2] Maybe we should turn the stained-glass-beauty around so that it shows to the outside.
- [3] Maybe those who witness the blessing of the light-art on the inside should gaze at this wonder long enough until it shines from their faces without them even knowing it.

Which idea speaks to you today?



Bletterman House



Bletterman House was built in 1789 by Hendrik Lodewyk Bletterman, who was the last landdrost (magistrate) of Stellenbosch to be appointed by the Dutch East India Company. It is a typical 18th century Cape house with 6 gables and an H-shaped ground plan. The Bletterman House is now the second home in the Stellenbosch museum complex. This house has been restored and furnished to illustrate a wealthy Stellenbosch home from around the period of 1750 - 1790.

The long building on the corner of Plein and Ryneveld streets was originally the quarters for enslaved people working at Bletterman House. From 1825 to 1833 the building served as a school for enslaved children. Led by Reverend Erasmus Smit, the school was equipped with 50 benches. Since boys and girls were taught separately, a wooden partition was installed between them. At first the school had 73 pupils, but by 1824 numbers had risen to 124 pupils. When the school closed, the children were accommodated at the Rhenish Mission Church.

In 1658 the VOC opened South Africa's first ever formal school after their Amersfoort merchant ship landed in Table Bay with 174 enslaved people (mostly children) on board. A school was launched to keep the children busy, and "give them some basic Christian education." In 1682 a colonial decree required compulsory school attendance for enslaved children under 12 years of age.

Starting in 1822 Government Free Schools (also known as English Free Schools) were established throughout the Cape Colony. The schools were mostly aimed at the poor, and were designed to be multiracial, however they soon became segregated. Church schools started to focus on educating non-White children while White children mostly attended Free Schools.





Education for all - reality or myth

After years of a democratic South Africa, where education is supposed to be equal and available to everyone, Stellenbosch is still a town where the school you go to says a lot about the opportunities that will be available to you for the rest of your life.

Therefore, if we are honest with ourselves, we will have to admit that not all children in South Africa have equal opportunities. School equipment, number of pupils per classroom, the level of danger learners face on the way to school, availability of after school activities and coaching look very different depending on where you live and learn.

#Let's get practical: One of the better legacies that the early church in Stellenbosch left us, was their contribution towards schooling for all. That begs the question for us as the church now: What small steps can we take to equal the playing field for the children in Stellenbosch? Are there any parents around me, working in my house or in my office building, who might need a bit of help with school supplies, extra tutors, access to a laptop to help their child apply to colleges or for bursaries?

A beacon of hope in the education landscape in Stellenbosch:

Calling Education: callingeducation.org.za

Volunteering opportunities:

Stellumthombo: stellumthombo.org

Kula Development Group: khuladg.com

training4changeS: training4changes.org



Die Braak & Rhenish Church



In 1822 Erasmus Smit, head of the Stellenbosch Cooperative Missionary Society, helped acquire the Braak from the Stellenbosch Turf Club. A small rectangular church building was completed in 1823 and inaugurated the following year, the opening sermon was delivered by Rev. Borchers of the NGK.

In 1829, the congregation was transferred to the Rhenish Mission Society. Rev Paul Daniel Lückhoff was appointed as the first minister; he had come to South Africa in 1828 with the initial group of missionaries sent by the Rhenish (meaning “of the river Rhine”) Missionary Society, which was one of the largest missionary societies in Germany.

After enslaved people were emancipated on 1 December 1838 many became members of the church, some walked up to 5 hours from their homes near Kuilsriver to attend services. By 1839, the building had become too small for the congregation, so a gallery was added and the vestry was incorporated into the church. The front wing was added in 1840. The bell-tower was built around 1920. The church building was transferred from the Rhenish Mission to the NGK in 1944, and the mission itself closed when it merged with Bethel Mission in 1971.

The church building is part of the larger Rhenish complex; the Rhenish Parsonage is now used as the toy museum, and the Rhenish Institute building is now the P.J. Olivier Art Centre.

On 1 May 1860, Rev Lückhoff founded a private school for girls. It was to provide schooling for the daughters of the Rhenish missionaries who were stationed in South Africa so they didn't have to send their daughters to school in Germany. Other families from around Stellenbosch sent their daughters to the school. The school was originally housed in a cottage on Alexander Street, but in 1862 the school was moved to the Rhenish complex, which included hostel facilities. By 1874 Rhenish was training teachers.





Die Braak & Rhenish Church

The “braak-land” of a history of slavery

There are volumes of horrific dehumanising stories from the history of enslaved people in Stellenbosch and the Western Cape. This is part of our sad heritage. An unthinkable reality of our past that we struggle to understand today.

#Reflect for a moment: What are some of the broken systemic realities of our day that will seem unthinkable for future generations?

From 1703, the Braak was an open space where the military exercised in the public sphere as a symbol of power and order. On 5 May 1777 the Kruithuis was finished as a storage space for ammunition, to maintain order if needed. The Braak & Kruithuis tell the story of broken relationships and conflict between enslaved people and free burgers, and between the Khoi-Khoi and free burgers. Stellenbosch was a town of immigrants – some by choice and others forced to live here. Years later, the Braak became a popular space for sports, celebrations and public gathering. The Kruithuis later became part of a local market. What a notable transformation! From displaying power to playing together; From storage of destruction to sharing of goods.

There are two buildings at this “Braak-land” (unused land with lots of potential) that remind us of a counter narrative, a narrative that says the Light shines in the darkness and the darkness will not prevail: St. Mary’s Anglican Church (1854) at the one end and the Rhenish Church (1823), in the shape of a cross, at the other end. These two churches played a significant role in the care, restoration and education of people forced to live in slavery. Officially, enslaved people were set free on 1 December 1838. After a couple of years of drought in the Cape Province, three days of heavy rain and some snow on the mountains started on that day. Some of the local farmers still speak of rain in the middle of summer as slave-rain (‘n slawe-reëntjie). The slave-owners believed that God sent the storm to prevent a slave-uprising, but the freed slaves said that the rain was symbolic of the tears of all those who died in captivity and could not experience freedom. So many freed slaves came to celebrate at Rhenish Church that day that there were 3 worship-services. The text of the day was John 8:36 “So, if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”

#Discuss In pairs as you walk to the next station: What are some of the dominant narratives of our time/context that have a negative impact on our society? What counter narrative do you think the church should proclaim in word and deed?

Town Hall



This building is the seat of Stellenbosch's local government. According to the World Bank South Africa is the world's most unequal country, and Stellenbosch is the country's most unequal town. The municipal government's commitment to transformation is complicated by the historical, spatial, social and economic inequalities in the area.

The Mandela Memorial Square was designed by Strijdom van der Merwe, and unveiled in 2013. At first glance, the sculpture appears to be a map, but as you look more closely you'll see it morph into an image of Nelson Mandela who became the face of the battle for liberation from political and social oppression during Apartheid. It does actually contain a map of locations across South Africa that played significant roles in Madiba's life. Turn your attention to Mandela's quote that is etched along the bottom of the marble column: "Never, never and never again will this beautiful country of ours be oppressed by one over another."

The artwork on the library wall depicts the arrival of the Huguenots at the Cape as they fled political and religious persecution by Catholics in Europe. Between 1688 and 1689, about 180 Huguenots settled in the Stellenbosch area, particularly in Franschoek.

The Huguenots were French Protestants who were persecuted by Catholics for their religious beliefs; thousands fled to other countries pursuing religious freedom. The VOC encouraged the Huguenots to immigrate to the Cape because they shared the same religious beliefs, and also because most Huguenots were highly trained craftsmen or experienced farmers. Huguenots were particularly experienced in viticulture and winemaking. They had an enduring impact on the church in South Africa, making particular contributions to NGK liturgy and music. The Huguenots were well known for their tradition of daily Bible reading, a practice that spread throughout many farming communities.





The longing and sacrifice for freedom – Mandela & Huguenots

Here we have the relief of the South African map and Nelson Mandela's face on the one hand and a fresco of the French Huguenots against the wall of the library on the other hand. These artworks remind us about a long history of longing for freedom.

During his trial, Nelson Mandela said these famous words: "During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. 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."

After his release from prison and during his reign as the first president of a free democratic South Africa he said: "As long as many of our people still live in utter poverty, as long as children still live under plastic covers, as long as many of our people are still without jobs, no South African should rest and wallow in the joy of freedom."

#Continue discussing with your companion but add this to your conversation:

What are the freedom that you long for in South Africa today? Spend some time in conversation with your companion on how you will realistically struggle, fight and live to make this longing a reality.



Old Main Building



The establishment of this building in 1886 represented the continued expansion of Stellenbosch town, and the growing influence of the church in this area. The building also reflects the continual tug of war between the English and the Afrikaners. It was designed by Carl Otto Hager, the most famous church architect of his day who also designed the Moederkerk and the Lutheran Church that still sits on the corner of Dorp Street and Bird Street. The opening of this building commemorated the 200th anniversary of the establishment of the town by Simon van der Stel in 1686. Stellenbosch College was soon renamed Victoria College in anticipation of the Queen's Jubilee. In 1918, Victoria College became Stellenbosch University thanks to financial support from Jan Marais of Coetzenburg.

Since 1921 this has been the faculty of law; it was the birthplace of Afrikaner nationalism and Apartheid philosophy. Stellenbosch university's theology and political science classrooms served as academic laboratories of Hendrik Verwoerd, who was once a professor here and went on to become one of the main architects of Apartheid. Every National Party leader except for P. W. Botha graduated from Stellenbosch. Botha served for a time in the honorary post of university chancellor. Most of the members of the cabinet and the White chamber of Parliament also attended Stellenbosch University. The majority of these people were active in the NGK.

This building was located on the edge of Die Vlakte, which was taken over by the university after being declared a white area in 1964. Historically the university has been a divisive symbol within the Stellenbosch community, which led the university to install the Constitution art work in 2020 as part of the university's redress project aimed at bringing to life the university's vision of an inclusive institution that is committed to a transformative student experience. The artwork portrays the preamble of the Constitution in English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa. It encourages reflection and conversations about lessons from the past and possibilities for our future, as enshrined in the South African constitution. The project was designed by Strijdom van der Merwe to emphasise the underlying values of the law and broader humanity.





Old Main Building

We the people

Look more closely at the preamble of the Constitution of South Africa exhibited in a beautiful way in diverse languages. Pause for a moment and think about the wonderful words that start the preamble “We, the people of South Africa...” We have a rich diverse heritage and we are impoverished by so many voices and systems that want to force this diversity into a divided us or them, or me and you narrative. More than ever, we need to reclaim the “We, the people of South Africa...” in a celebration of diversity and a commitment to unity. We need to become a more tangible us.

#Reflect: Choose a language and read slowly through the text. Maybe even read it twice. Which word stands out for you?

#Connect, commit and share: Please take a piece of string, find a friendly stranger and ask them to help you to commit yourself to your one word from the preamble of our constitution you are called to today. Ask them to stand on the opposite side from you so that the words stand between you. Pause for a moment and look at each other through that word. Then tie the string around your word, helping each other. Help your companion to do the same with their word of choice. As you walk to the next station share with each other why you chose that specific word and what would it ask of you to commit to living that word.

#While walking, look out for: the map of Die Vlakte at the entrance of the Arts and Social Sciences building. The building is built on the grounds where families were removed as part of the 1964 forced removals.

#Reflect

Hermann Giliomee writes in his book *Always been here*: “Separation was necessary not because the people were so different, but because they were so alike. And the most important way to make people feel different was to give them more privileges than other people.”



Stellenbosch Mosque



Christians played a major role in facilitating the spread of Islam to and within South Africa through slavery. Enslaved Muslims did not have to be treated as Christian brothers, so Islam was good for business. The first Muslims in the Cape were enslaved people, political exiles and prisoners brought by the VOC from around Africa, India, Madagascar, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

As the Cape Colony grew, Islam provided a refuge for enslaved people separated from their families and tribesmen; a new familial link could be established based on religious affiliation. Much like the traditional family unit, religious family provided solidarity and cohesion within a challenging environment.

In 1892 Jamat Kariem asked the local government on behalf of the “Malay community in the township” for land in Die Vlakte to build a mosque. The request was granted in 1896, and the first mosque was built in 1897; before then Muslims prayed at home. Around 1934 the mosque was broken down, but a new one was built within two months thanks to a joint effort from both Muslim and Christian artisans.

Only one mosque was built in Stellenbosch, and even under the Group Areas Act, Muslims were allowed to enter “White” Stellenbosch to attend prayer services. However, because non-Whites were relocated to the outskirts of the town, the trek into town five times per day proved to be very difficult for those who wished to fulfil their religious obligations.

It is believed that the name of the street is a reference to the Malay word ‘bang’ used to refer to the muezzin’s call to prayer, although some say it got its name from the Afrikaans word bang (“fear”) because non-Muslims feared the growth of the religion. In 1988 the Mosque opened a Madrassah (school) to educate Muslim children. By 1993, Goejjatul Islam Mosque was extended to its present day form. The mosque is a Sunni mosque.





Stellenbosch Mosque

Goejjatul Islam Mosque – welcoming the stranger

J.S Mayson writes in the 19th-century "In 1652 a few Malays of Batavia were brought by the Dutch into the Residency, and subsequent Settlement of the Cape of Good Hope..." Through the slave trade and the Dutch East India Company (VOC), a diverse group of Islamic people became part of South Africa and brought with them a sweet, spicy, colourful heritage. The first free Muslims came as early as 1658.

The Muslim community were much more welcoming of enslaved people than any other institution, officiating marriages between slaves, caring for the poor and officiating funerals. Since the NGK did not allow slave owners to separate married couples when they sold their slaves, the church also was not very keen on marrying enslaved people. But since the Muslim community were willing to officiate marriages, many slaves turned to the Islam communities rather than the Christian churches.

#A silent moment of solidarity in prayer: The age old conflict between Israel and Palestine has recently come to our attention again. It serves as a reminder of the never-ending cycle of hatred and the painful destructive consequences. Today we do not want to choose sides or share opinions; we just want to stand in silence for a moment of solidarity with their pain and longing.





Die Volkskerk was the first Coloured church with Coloured ministers in Die Vlakte. It started in 1922 after people left Rhenish church due to a conflict over a rental property which the pastor rented to 2 different people simultaneously. Initially the Municipality would not make land available for a new church due to pressure from existing churches, so people met in house churches and until they got this plot. In 1924 the church opened a school building (which is now the Christ Church hall) for the children who were forced to leave Rhenish school after the church split. The school went on to serve a diverse group of children. Die Volkskerk became one of the most popular churches in Die Vlakte; the church and school became the heartbeat of the community.

On 25 September 1964, the Group Areas Act declared Die Vlakte a White group area. Some 3,700 people were forcibly removed and relocated to the outlying communities of Idas Valley & Cloeteville. Die Volkskerk passed into the possession of the NGK and eventually to CESA (now REACH), In Stellenbosch's White community the history of this building and what it represents is either largely unknown or ignored. In the Coloured community this building represents the stripping away of the community's lifeblood, as well as the resilience of people facing enormous injustice. The forced removals and relocation of the church left long-lasting scars among many people.

At the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 1999, then CESA Bishop Frank Retief testified, "On the great issue of justice for all, we were often insensitive. We had not made the connection between gospel and society...We ignored all these things because we felt we had a priority to preach and teach the gospel...To get on board the social action programs and protest movements was to identify with the theological emphasis, which we saw as a betrayal of Christ's message. We do not apologise for our stand on the central message of the Bible. However, we do want to express our apology, our sorrow and regret at the things we left undone. Although largely ignorant and unwitting, we were nevertheless passive and compliant."





The heritage of pain

The Volkskerk originated as a community church - the first Coloured congregation with Coloured ministers in Die Vlakte.

In Hilton Biscombe's book, *In ons bloed*, we find a wealth of stories and memories of the people who lived in Die Vlakte.

This site, and similar ones within "Die Vlakte," make tangible the absence of the community forced out under the Group Areas Act, with the demolition of their homes that followed their removal.

3700 Coloured residents, 6 schools, 4 churches, 1 mosque, a cinema and ten businesses were affected by the removals.

Richard Rohr writes: "Pain that doesn't get transformed gets transmitted."

#Open conversation: We live with an overwhelming heritage of pain and brokenness in Stellenbosch, in Cloetesville, Idasvalley and other areas where people were forcibly removed.

How can/should we transform our pain?

How can/should we be agents of reconciliation, transformers of the heritage of pain?

Old Lückhoff School



Lückhoff High School was established in 1935. It was the first secondary school for Stellenbosch's Coloured population, and later welcomed learners of Colour from around the Winelands, across the province, and even from South West Africa (Namibia). At the time missionary schools only made provision for primary education, so children wanting to attend secondary school had to travel to Cape Town. Following pleas from parents, a delegation led by Rev. Weber of the Rhenish Missionary Society and Rev. A.F. Louw of the NGK lobbied the Department of Education to establish a suitable local school. It was decided to name the school after a missionary, Rev. Paul Daniel Lückhoff, who first arrived in Stellenbosch in 1830 and made an immense contribution to the education of Coloured children.

The school started by meeting in 2 homes in Die Vlakte before a permanent location was secured in Banhoek Road where the Old Lückhoff building stands today. The school faced enormous challenges in its early days with insufficient staff, resources and facilities, as well as general opposition from many White residents. Parents of learners mostly held low paying jobs and often struggled to buy what their children needed for school. Nevertheless, the Die Vlakte community embraced the school and regularly conducted fundraisers for the children. The school fostered an ethos of individual and communal pride, as well as resilience and excellence.

After Die Vlakte was declared a White residential area, the school relocated to Idas Valley on 30 October 1969. Learners were forced to carry their school desks over 3 km to the new site. Some learners reported seeing a truck carrying the rest of their belongings pass them by as they carried their desks.

Despite enduring painful challenges, Lückhoff High School has played a significant role in Stellenbosch history. The history of Lückhoff has not been well documented; in contrast, much has been written about the history of schools established for white children in Stellenbosch. Consider the way in which history is recorded, the role that missionaries have played in education, and how "Christian" education has perpetuated pervasive injustice.





A challenging reality beckons us to involvement

When Christ was asked what the center of the Law was, he responded: "Love God, love others as yourself."

Matthew 22: 35-40

"Then one of them, a religious scholar, posed this question to test him: "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" Jesus answered him, " 'Love the Lord your God with every passion of your heart, with all the energy of your being, and with every thought that is within you.' This is the great and supreme commandment. And the second is like it in importance: 'You must love your friend in the same way you love yourself.' Contained within these commandments to love you will find all the meaning of the Law and the Prophets."

('Friend' is as translated from the Aramaic word 'kareb', which means 'one who is close to you', emotionally or by proximity. The Greek means neighbour).

In *Holy Spirit Here and Now* Trevor Hudson says, "We will only be able to discern responses to our history and current challenges in relationship with each other: "Faithful discernment in decision making is seldom an individual enterprise. More often than not, the Holy Spirit guides us through both our own thinking and the feelings it generates, as well as through the insights that come from others."

In *Anam Cara: 25th Anniversary Edition* John O Donohue says, "When we love and allow ourselves to be loved, we begin more and more to inhabit the kingdom of the eternal. Fear changes into courage, emptiness becomes plenitude, and distance becomes intimacy."

Is there one relationship with someone of a different race which you could nurture and cherish into depth and growth, holding as an aim an equal intimacy to someone of my own race? If not, ask God for an opportunity to build new relationships, and watch the horizon. Ask God for the grace to stay with the inevitable discomforts and reap from the inevitable joys.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING

Always Been Here by Hermann Giliomee

In Ons Bloed by Hilton Biscombe

"Rhenish Mission Society in South Africa: 1829 - 1965" by Calvin S. Van Wijk

"Stellenbosch and the Muslim Communities, 1896-1966" by Chet James Paul Fransch

Stellenbosch Three Centuries by Francois Smuts

The Huguenots of South Africa 1688-1988 by P. Coertzen

The Lie of 1652 by Patric Tariq Mellet

The Story of the Church in South Africa by Kevin Roy

A list of additional resources including books, articles, podcasts, and videos can be found at www.servestellenbosch.co.za.



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