

Address at BBN-SHEPSA Inspired Destiny Event

By Michael Lee, founder, Institute of Futurology

@ Mitsubishi Motors, Paarden Eiland, Cape Town

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Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the future, where all of us will spend the rest of our earthly lives.

My name is Michael Lee, a futurist, Cape Tonian and proud member of the Rainbow Nation. This evening I'd like to share a vision for South Africa's future and then hand over to Joe Cook of BBN to give you an inspired plan and mission to put into reality, in the years immediately ahead, the right vision for our land and its youth.

For those of you who may be unfamiliar with what a futurist is/does, the Institute of Futurology (www.futurology.co.za) I founded is a think tank which believes in using scientific methods to study the future so we can learn to read the signs of the times and plan ahead for what's coming long before it gets here.

We're an alliance partner of BBN in the service of a SHEP-SA – a Safe, High Employment and Prosperous South Africa.

To become a futurist, I completed a Master's degree in futures studies at the Institute for Futures Research (IFR) (www.ifr.sun.ac.za), which is part of the University of Stellenbosch's graduate school of business. I only mention this because the IFR is a powerful national resource for the future which has been in existence since the 1970s. Its research data played a large role in Clem Sunter's High Road/Low Road scenarios of the late 1980s and 1990s which, in turn, certainly contributed to the creation of a climate for negotiation leading to the 1994 *miracle* elections. It was the High Road to peace, reconciliation and economic growth or the Low Road to race war, bankruptcy and social collapse.

Tonight, at this event, we're asking you to dream of an inspired new destiny for SA. Let me remind you that very few nations have a miracle in their history. That is in our DNA now. So, I believe, is the spirit of Madiba - which my wife and I witnessed first-hand at the Union Buildings in Pretoria in December last year when we paid our final respects to the father of our nation lying in state. It was one of the most moving experiences of our lives.

Today, however, we stand once again at the crossroads in our country. Not only has beloved Madiba passed away but we are only a few weeks from the most open and important elections in the rainbow nation's history. This is not the crossroads between the High Road and the Low Road. Inspired by Nelson Mandela, Archbishop Tutu, FW de Klerk and many other peacemakers, we did, indeed, choose the High Road. But twenty years on, the High Road has taken us, in 2014, to another fork in the road. And before us, ladies and gentlemen, lies a stark choice between two futures – the Wolf Future, in the one direction, and the Shepherd Future, in the other direction.

The Wolf, as you know, is a ruthless, opportunistic predator, while the Shepherd is a loving protector. Bear in mind, as I proceed, this contrast between *predators* and *protectors*.

So, the Wolf Future for SA would be filled with predators of all kinds: every kind of wicked, callous and self-centred behaviour from corruption to rape, from contempt for democracy and the rule of law to breaking into people's homes in order to steal and loot.

By contrast, the Shepherd Future for SA will be filled with shepherd leaders honouring the spirit of Madiba, caring for the poor and the unemployed, for the weak and vulnerable, affirming the human dignity of all South Africans, building the brightness of the colours of our national rainbow.

You know, references to the Shepherd in the Good Book range from the timeless poetry of Psalm 23 – “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want” to this powerful scripture in **Matthew 9:36-37**:

When he saw the crowds he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.”

The Jewish people of these times were oppressed and uncertain about their future living under harsh Roman rule. In this passage, Jesus refers to a situation of high unemployment – *the workers are few*. And yet, at the same time, the land is fertile, which means the land is ripe for a spiritual and material harvest. So there can be unemployment – when the workers are few (and those not working, by implication, are many) – even when there's a harvest of plenty. Joe and I see a harvest of plenty as part of the Shepherd Future we will strive for.

Which future will you choose and work for, the Wolf Future or the Shepherd Future?

Last week, in the news, we saw so clearly the crossroads we face right now between the Wolf and the Shepherd Scenarios. When the Public Protector, Thuli Madonsela, South Africa's 3rd Public Protector, concluded that the President and his family had benefitted materially from the security upgrades to his Nkandla residence, we saw two forces at work. On the one hand, there was the force of the law and the constitution, the force of integrity and ethics, symbolised by Madonsela. And then, on the other hand, we saw unethical, lawless forces at work, the flagrant and uncaring misuse of hard-earned public funds, symbolised by Nkandla. Analyst Moeletsi Mbeki, brother of former President Thabo Mbeki, has accused the ruling party of “sitting on a honey pot with no regard whatsoever for ethics or accountability and indulging incredibly.”¹

While the arrogant misuse of public money is an example of the predatory Wolf scenario, her work as Public Protector casts Thuli Madonsela, without doubt, in the role of a Shepherd, full of dignity and bravery. Public leaders like Madonsela will not betray the born-free generation, our youth.

¹ <http://www.news24.com/Elections/News/Moeletsi-Mbeki-on-Nkandla-2014-elections-20140324>
Moeletsi Mbeki on Nkandla, 2014 elections, MJ Lourens, News24, 2014-03-24

The online encyclopaedia, Wikipedia, describes her as follows: “a human rights lawyer, equality expert, and Public Protector of South Africa. She was one of 11 technical experts who helped in the drafting of the final constitution of South Africa in 1994-5. Born in Johannesburg in 1962, Madonsela grew up in Soweto and is the daughter...of informal traders. She is a Christian.”

Ms Madonsela said in a recent interview that holding people in public office accountable is not an act of hatred but an act of love. She has a shepherd heart, a servant heart. I believe a courageous new heroine has been gifted to our nation.

And there is another lesson here which leads into Joe’s talk. From informal traders to Public Protector...that is a rise from rags to riches, from poverty to power.

Remember from the scriptures we discussed that even when the workers are few, the harvest can still be ripe. So you have to find a way to look for and work for the harvest, because that is where the abundance is, that is where the wealth is. There are *two* main ways to find the harvest, to fight our way out of poverty. One way is through **entrepreneurship** - of which Joe is a master - he’ll explain to you how it can work in the context of South Africa’s current economic and social challenges. But what is the second way to go from rags to riches, from poverty to power?

To answer this I want to tell you a story about this man: [show Time magazine cover of 1967]: Professor Chris Barnard.

Who will ever forget when he made medical history on the 3rd of December 1967 by performing the world’s first human heart transplant right here in Cape Town at Groote Schuur Hospital on the slopes of Devil’s Peak. Without exaggeration, at one point he was one of the most famous faces on the planet.

But he grew up in a home of extremely modest means in the small dusty railway country town of Beaufort West. It was a spacious but humble home without any geyser or hot running water. It had an outside toilet house using an unsavoury bucket system for removal of human waste products. Bathing in the Barnard home also took place outside in a zinc bath, winter and summer. There was no telephone, no radio and, of course, no television. The Barnard sons went barefoot to school and wore hand-me downs for much of their childhood and youth. Money was scarce in their home. Each of the three sons, Johannes, Chris and Marius, needed study loans from the charity *Helpmekaar* to assist them in getting their university education. But what is even more noteworthy is that this modest and simple life they’d led in the Karoo town was actually a step-up from the social conditions in which previous generations of Barnards had lived.

Chris’s father Adam had come from a long line of woodcutters dwelling in the forests of Knysna in times before there weren’t any roads leading in and out of it and when wild animals and elephants roamed freely. They’d been shack-dwellers, poor whites, if you like, living in their corrugated iron homes which had neither running water nor electricity. These forest Barnards had felled trees, especially stinkwood and yellowwood, and then cut up the timber, selling it to monopolistic agents who exploited them, keeping them in a spiral of poverty. They were largely uneducated people who lived and died simply by the words of the Holy Bible.

Then, through a special effort of will, Adam Hendrikus Barnard, whose own parents had never left the forest, had walked out of it one day to seek a better life for himself and his descendants. He'd joined the Salvation Army in Oudtshoorn and eventually worked his way up in the church to become a minister of religion. Afflicted all his life by severe asthma, he faithfully served his congregation, the Coloured townfolk of Beaufort West, for 37 years.

Adam Barnard believed that education was the only way to get out of poverty. Through religion and education he raised up a generation of Barnards who could attain prosperity and success. And his sons certainly found the abundant harvest. This, then, is the second way to go from poverty to power: **education**.

One day, Joe Cook walked into a squatter camp in the Cape and he saw its grinding, grim poverty and that harassed look of people unsure of their future, being like a lost and leaderless people. *When he saw the crowds he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.* You could say it's like living in a state of futurelessness.

And then the simple beauty of Joe's SHEP vision for SA was born – how can we become a Safe, High Employment Prosperous country? You see, the Shepherd Future we envisage is the same as SHEP-SA. But to get there we need to fight off the Wolves and walk away from the Wolf culture.

But what is the future, you may say? Where is it? Here it is. [Hold up acorns/oak nuts]. In the right conditions of moisture and sunlight, these acorns, or oak nuts, perhaps after being carried there by squirrels, will germinate as a tap root bursts through the top of the acorn. It can then develop into a seedling and grow into a strong oak tree, which itself will produce acorns after about twenty years. What's amazing about these acorns is that they are intelligent. They know how to become an oak tree. They each have a code built into their DNA, with hundreds of rules, like a software programme, which tell it what it is and what it has to do to become an oak.

And it's the same with us humans. The starting-point of each person is the zygote. This is a single cell created when a mother's egg is fertilized. Despite being truly miniscule, it contains all the genetic information – the genome - needed to form a whole new person. About 30 hours after being conceived, the zygote, containing this DNA blueprint, begins the self-replicating cell division process. The growth of a human individual in all its immense complexity is underway.

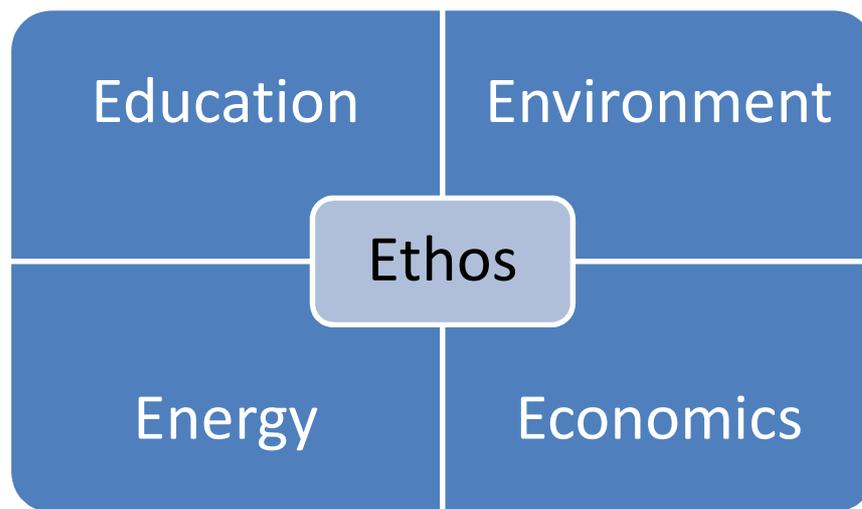
What is wondrous is that at conception, each person's future growth is contained inside a code compacted into a truly miniscule cell. The future is already in the egg. Once again, intelligence is clearly at work. The cell processes a significant amount of information, determining which steps will be followed in the right sequence at the right times. For that reason some have called the nucleus of the zygote an information centre. For it stores its own instruction manual, nothing less than a programme for producing a person. To make each of us, it's estimated there must be millions of rules involved.

What this all means is that the future is real, not abstract, that it follows rules and is not as random as people tend to think. It is knowable from a scientific point of view because we live in an intelligent universe, which is largely coded, subject to laws of nature as well as laws of behaviour.

At the Institute of Futurology we are working on a causal model of the future and a software programme called Future Finder for individuals, organisations and nations to test their direction future readiness and investment in building their future. In *Knowing our Future*, I give a proper theory for building knowledge of the world before it happens using logic and scientific analysis. I discuss the ten greatest predictions of all time. We need to get much better at understanding and forecasting the future.

We can apply this futurological approach to social studies as well and we have developed the Five “E” model for looking into the future of a nation like South Africa:

The Five E Model for Building a Nation’s Future



[EXPLAIN EACH OF THE 5 E’S AND WHY ETHOS IS AT THE CORE]

We have also pledged to lend our futurological expertise to BBN to help SA turn the all-important SHEP SA vision, our Shepherd Future, into reality, addressing, at the same time, the three key challenges of Crime, Unemployment and Poverty.

I’m personally excited about the prospect of BBN training an army of “Yes I Can” social entrepreneurs and budding young shepherd leaders, to help us build the Shepherd Future. I’m sure you’ll join is in rejecting the Wolf Future and embracing, instead a Shepherd Future for South Africa as we seek to protect the wealth and resources of our beautiful, no, our wonderful, land, including the most precious resource of all – our rainbow, which is us!

Ladies and gentlemen, the workers are few but the harvest, nevertheless, can be plentiful.
Thank you!

It is my privilege and honour to hand over to a man with a plan and also the heart of a shepherd, Mr Joe Cook.