An educational excursion to study the impact of HIV/AIDS on South Africa becomes a life-altering journey into human suffering, resilience and hope... and inspires nine Morehouse students to embrace the pursuit and ideals of ethical leadership.
t is, April 26, less than a month before the trip to South Africa and the Morehouse College students who have been selected by the Leadership Center to make the journey are the portraits of placidity. They wait in a classroom in John H. Wheeler Hall—some discussing upcoming graduation plans, others the parties, and a few others food—to be briefed about the country that sits on the southern tip of Africa.

The gregarious voice of trip coordinator Dr. Virginia “Ginger” Floyd, a consultant to the Leadership Center, interrupts the light banter, beginning the hour-long session, in which she quickly runs through a semester’s worth of learning. Floyd graphically talks about the realities of HIV/AIDS in the country: The people who are dying. The millions of orphans left behind. The sex workers who copulate, not because of drug addiction, but to buy food and clothing.

But she also tells about some of the country’s treasures: the cultural offerings seen in beaded artwork, stone carvings and textiles as well as accented chronicles woven from the mouth of a corpulent traditional healer and the dances of bare-breasted women.

The students have become experts on the subject of HIV/AIDS. Indeed, the socioeconomic, cultural and leadership implications of South Africa’s HIV/AIDS problem have been the focus of their studies.

Instead of a mere trip abroad, the journey to South Africa is a field research project to bring faces and personalities to the facts and figures they’ve learned.

In less than a month, the students make friends out of strangers, taste dishes that massage their palates, and receive moments of clarity that awaken their senses. And in the end, in a country some 8,421 miles away from Morehouse College, they found people who aren’t too different from them. These are our observances in words and pictures.

**Prologue**

**AIDS: Counting the Lost**

- By the end of 2003, there were 5.3 million adults—nearly 21 percent of the country’s, according to the CIA World Factbook.
- Six million South Africans are expected to die from AIDS-related diseases during the next decade.
- UNAIDS reports that more than one million children were orphaned when their parents or guardians died of AIDS.
- Because of gender issues—such as a higher reported rate of husbands infecting their wives—the infection rate of women appears to be higher: For every 10 men, 20 women are infected.

Members of the Morehouse College Leadership Center’s Oprah South Africa Leadership Program gather for a photo inside Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport’s South Terminal on May 17 before boarding South African Airways for a 10:30 a.m. flight.
Patience Paves Route to South Africa

PATIENCE IS MORE than a virtue for Dr. Walter Earl Fluker, executive director of the Leadership Center at Morehouse College. Patience lies at the center of the story of how it took almost a decade to bring to fruition an initiative—the Oprah South African Leadership Project—that would send nine Morehouse students on a four-week trip to South Africa.

It was in 1996 that Fluker, then a dean at Colgate Rochester Divinity School in New York, and Leadership Center Scholar-in-Residence R. Drew Smith, then a Butler University professor, traveled to Freetown, Sierra Leone, on a Ford Foundation grant to interview youth who were victims of a violent coup in the West African country.

“What I began to understand was that these young people were being used to disrupt civil society in order to ensure the traffic of drugs from powerful warlords,” says Fluker.

Fast forward to May 17, 2005, after nine men of Morehouse have spent a school term learning the politics, culture, religion and economics of Africa and, as part of the Oprah South Africa Leadership Project, will take their lessons and apply them to South Africa’s HIV/AIDS challenges and the pursuit of ethical leadership.

The men of Morehouse are excited…and observant.

—Monét Cooper

May 20, 2005

Facing the Challenges of Ethical Leadership

WHEN WE VISITED the University of Pretoria to talk to the program coordinators at its HIV/AIDS center, there was a quote by Antonio Gramsci in the book given to us about males and the virus.

“The starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is ‘knowing thyself’ as a product of the historical process to date which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving inventory.”

Continued on next page
At the Crossroads of Tradition and Religion

“OLD MEN TEND TO talk too much. We cannot make babies anymore, so we give birth with our words,” says Baba Creto Mutwa, a traditional African healer, in heavily accented English.

It is afternoon and the group gathers in a park off a main road in the predominately black township of Soweto to hear Mutwa speak. The park, a lush green place, even as winter begins to settle on the country, contains his studio space and sculptures.

While some organizations may push social programs to aid South Africa’s still struggling black population, Mutwa advocates a return to the ways of the African elders: solve problems with love; respect nature; teach blacks about their history and they cannot help but succeed. It is a lack of cultural knowledge that is killing Africans as much as HIV/AIDS, he says.

The clash between traditional African spirituality and Christianity plays a large role in the fight against HIV/AIDS in South Africa and the struggle to uplift the country and the continent’s blacks. The 83-year-old healer recommends a return to ancient African practices as the panacea for the world’s ills.

“You must realize that the success of Africa,” he says, “is the success of humankind.”

—moët cooper
Upon reaching South Africa, I have been in the process of sorting the deposits made by a history of suffering and sacrifice. With each new experience and encounter, I gain a greater sense of self-worth, self-mastery, and self-rule. In order to gain a better understanding of who I am, I have had to deconstruct many of my thoughts and perceptions. This deconstruction has created space for examining the foundation upon which I stand as an emerging ethical leader.

This trip to South Africa has given me an opportunity to rebuild myself just as the leaders of South Africa are rebuilding from years of suffering and sacrifice.

—Jamison Collier '06

May 22, 2005
Culture Through the Eyes of Others

TODAY, WE VISITED the Lesedi Cultural Village where I was terribly disturbed by the lack of realism. My discomfort does not lie in the fact that their reenactments of tribal life were simply not real, but I am disturbed because that “showcase” is representative of how Europeans awe filled interest in African culture has jaded the meaning of its traditions.

—Mark Rainey '05

May 24, 2005
Spiritual Beliefs Provide Foundation for Social Justice

WE TALKED WITH several leaders within the South African Council of Churches (SACC), the facilitating body of 26-member church denominations in South Africa at Khoto House, which literally means “House of Peace.” It was once a safe haven for anti-apartheid activists and is now home to a number of different businesses and organizations, including SACC.

I was interested in hearing how the religious community put their principles and doctrines into play when apartheid was prevalent in the country.

When the Rev. Moss Ntlha, the general secretary of the Evangelical Alliance of South Africa, said that if Jesus Christ, “the most powerful and authoritative person in the world,” could wash someone’s feet, we could most certainly serve others, the passion I have to serve others was reinforced. My pastor, Kevin E. Donalson Sr. ’94 always tells me that when a person has a true passion to serve, personal satisfaction and gratification are never required.

—Arthur Woodard ’05

May 25, 2005
Students Reap the Rewards of Dialogue

UNSCRIPTED LINES between the activities of a busy itinerary are the spaces, many students say, where learning has taken place: Chats about South African politics while waiting in line for food. A few words exchanged to learn “good morning” in Xhosa, Zulu or one of the many languages spoken here. Talking with a group of school children on a field trip. Solemnly listening while someone describes his life before and after apartheid.

And so it was today at CIDA City Campus—a Johannesburg college for South African students who otherwise would not have been able to afford school—that the American students arrived to engage in a dialogue with their South African peers. Most of the school’s students come from the townships or rural areas. Without CIDA, many of these students would most likely be among the millions of unemployed South Africans or struggling to go to school and further evidence of the government’s struggle to level the playing field.

“The government is run by blacks, but the people who own it are still white,” said Dr. G. Brown, political counselor to South Africa.

The seeping divide between the races bleeds into every vein of the country. It even affects how South Africans regard other Africans, said one CIDA student.

“South Africans believe that if a black person from other parts of Africa come to South Africa, that person will engage in illegal activities,” said Stoan, a CIDA student, during the forum.

“But if a white person comes, South Africans believe that person will bring new ideas and business.”

—monét cooper

with reporting by Rheba Knox

May 26, 2005
The Path to Reconciliation: To Forgive or to Heal?

THE MOREHOUSE COLLEGE and Butler University groups rode to the University of Pretoria (UP) for a conversation with two ministers: one, a white pastor of the Dutch Reform Church, which once supported apartheid, and the second a black Presbyterian pastor, who was an anti-apartheid activist once imprisoned for his beliefs.

The Rev. Maake Masango, professor at the university’s School

Continued on next page
The Rev. Dr. Piet Meiring (left), a professor at the University of Pretoria School of Theology and the Rev. Dr. Maake Masango (right), pastor of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in the Alexandra township and professor at the University of Pretoria School of Theology.

May 27, 2005
Remembering the Past: Taking a Stand for the Future

ON JUNE 16, 1976, what was planned as a peaceful protest by student organizers over the introduction of Afrikaans as the functional language in township schools, quickly turned into a devastating massacre. Hector Pieterson, a 13-year-old student, was the first victim to be killed by police that fateful day, hence, the naming of the [Hector Pieterson Memorial] museum in his honor.

While walking through the museum, I gained a greater sense of self-consciousness, self-determination, self-pride and self-dignity knowing that a determined group of young people “stood” and sacrificed all in the name of freedom, peace, and democracy. I realized that I, too, must therefore stand for something to avoid falling for anything in my quest to embody ethical leadership.

—Jamison Collier ’06

May 30, 2005
Wait On No One

BEFORE THE FORUM, we went to a museum exhibit on the University of Western Cape campus about the struggles of apartheid. The museum intrigued me because it emphasized the role of women in the liberation struggle, a subject that other museums have touched on briefly, but never displayed as being integral to the anti-apartheid struggle.

I’ve heard a saying that goes something like, “You can tell the advancement of a society by the role of women in that society.” Since I’ve been in South Africa, I’ve seen at the grassroots level that South Africans and Americans have a lot of work to do in that area.

When we ask the South African students what issues they believe are prevalent in their society, and then we compare lists, we get almost the exact same list.

One sister, who was very outspoken in her smaller group but became a little shy in the open discussion, raised her hand after a little motivation from Brian Buchanan ’07, another Morehouse student. In response to a question about the government’s role in curbing these problems, she passionately said, “We cannot wait on the government to stop the problems. The problems are spreading because of a lack of personal responsibility.”

—Nashid Sharrief ’06
BENJAMIN TAU, our tour guide, was a former Robben Island inmate who spent 11 years of his life in the prison. During the tour, I asked him why did he spend all of his days working as a tour guide at the same place he spent 11 years of his life.

He replied, “Someone has to do it.” For some reason, that hit me real hard. I often times feel that when it comes to helping others, if I don’t do it, then who will? His statement kind of reinforced for me why I feel so strong about serving others.

The impact was strongest when I stood directly in front of Nelson’s Mandela’s cell, number five in the B section, which was reserved for political prisoners. Sections A and C housed criminal prisoners. What affected me the most was to hear how these prisoners were actually treated.

It was heart breaking to look at the cement floor where Mr. Mandela slept without a cot or anything for cushion. It was enormously troubling to look at the five-gallon bucket that Mr. Mandela had to use for a bathroom because there was no toilet in his cell. Who can imagine having to smell something like that two feet away from you all night long until the following morning when you were allowed to empty and clean your waste bucket?

—Arthur Woodard ’06
WHAT THE STUDENTS SEE of Nyanga are rows upon rows of aluminum and wood shacks. They are sobered with the disbelief that human beings can actually live here, and that generations of blacks have spent lifetime after lifetime in the same crumbling space.

“When you could move to Khayelitsha, anyone in Nyanga who was able to move left,” says Stephanie Kilroe, director of fundraising for the Etafeni Playgroup Project. “If you couldn’t get out, you stayed here.”

“Here” is Etafeni, a non-profit daycare center where 60 HIV/AIDS-infected and non-infected children from the Nyanga township are cared for while their parents work. The Morehouse-Butler group tours the Etafeni’s daycare center, garden and office building.

Etafeni, a Xhosa word meaning “open space,” began 20 years ago when Rose Mbude began a playgroup on a plot of vacant land near her house to care for the children in her neighborhood—many of them from families too poor to pay for them to attend preschool.

Later, the group travels to the HIV-Income Generation Project where we meet Nokhwezi Ngayi, an HIV-positive worker whose husband gave her the virus. She discovered her HIV-positive status last spring, when her sister, who is now dead from an AIDS-related illness, encouraged her to get tested.

“Every time I disclose my HIV/AIDS status, [people] don’t believe it. They think that [the people at the Income Generation Project] are paid for saying we are HIV positive,” says Ngayi, mother of an 8-year-old daughter. “The only thing I can do is speak out against HIV/AIDS. It takes time for people to accept.”

—monét cooper
June 3, 2005
Saying Goodbye: Butler Team Leaves for U.S.A.

WHEN WE WOKE UP this morning, it was pouring down rain and our first day of community service at the Etafeni Daycare Center was postponed until Monday.

What was special about this seemingly uneventful day was that at the last hour we were able to spend time with a crucial part of our group: the eight students from Butler University.

We stood in the lobby of Breakwater Lodge at the University of Cape Town to say our final goodbyes and take the last of our hundreds of pictures with the students from Butler who became our family on this trip. Within the short two weeks we were together, we had our ups and downs, memorable moments, nights to remember and days to forget. We partied, we worked, we debated funny and serious topics hours into the night. We laughed and in the fading moments that all of us would ever spend together as a team, there were even tears.

—Mark Rainey ’05

Butler and Morehouse students saying goodbye.

CAPE POINT, the southern-most point in South Africa and the place where the Indian and Atlantic oceans meet, is the most beautiful place I have ever set foot on.

The experience of Cape Point includes breathing the freshest air in the world straight from the Antarctic; standing in a bird watcher’s paradise; and being among 1,100 indigenous plant species—some of which cannot be found anywhere else on earth.

Atop one of the highest sea cliffs in the world—it is 249m above sea level—the view from the lighthouse of the convergence of both land and sea was stunning and spiritually overwhelming. To observe God’s creation from such an amazing viewpoint was like putting on a new pair of glasses. In these glasses, I was introduced to magnificence never before envisioned.

My time at the lighthouse was very spiritual. For the first time in longer than I can remember, I was able to set aside all concerns and simply meditate and reflect. For me, it is a mandate that we as ethical leaders appreciate and recognize our natural resources, which are not unlimited.

—Bronson Edwards ’07

June 4, 2005
A Higher View

June 5, 2005
Define Yourself; Redefine the World

THROUGHOUT THE COURSE of the trip, there were many poverty-stricken areas that we visited. In America they are called ghettos. Here they are known as townships. But what crushed my spirit was a comment made by a 9-year-old boy today.

As I was walking into the fast food restaurant, the young black boy looked at me and said, “Nigga, what’s up?”

I had never heard it pronounced in that tone before and coming from a young black kid it made me feel as if I was being disrespected for the first time, even though he was saying it to be friendly.

Whether it’s “nigga” or “nigger,” the word is a derogatory term used to demoralize blacks. But over a period of time, we, as black people, especially in my generation, have lost our sense of self-realization. We’ve lost who we are and what the meaning of this word was intended to represent. It took that little boy calling me a “nigga” in that tone of voice and environment to stop me from using the word myself. I will stop using this derogatory word because it does not mean “friend” or “my boy.”

When I asked the same little boy if he would call a white person a “nigga” he said, “NO!”

Over time, many minds have been traumatized and brainwashed, but we need to gain trust among ourselves or we will never liberate our race from mental and physical oppression.

—Brian Buchanan Jr. ’07
June 6, 2005
Blest Be the Bricks that Bind

CIRCA 1840S, my maternal ancestors, the Motleys, leave Danville, Va., for Tuskegee, Ala., as slaves.

As the family story goes, my great-great grandfather was a slave trained as a brick mason. During January of each year, he was given “conditional freedom” to hire himself out to work for white folk in and around Macon County, Ala. After paying a certain sum to his owner for the privilege of earning an income, he saved the balance of his earnings and eventually purchased freedom for himself and his siblings.

Today, at age 54, in the Nyanga township in Cape Town, South Africa, I realized a dream. I worked side by side with Mark Rainey ’05 and three South African brothers making bricks that will be used to complete buildings for Etafeni, a day care center for about 60 children in the community.

In a conversation shortly before his death in the late 1980s, my uncle Bill lamented the fact that no one would carry on the family trade after he died. I am not a brick mason or a brick maker, yet today, each time I shoveled the cement mixture into the brick mold, pulled it out and looked at a row of five perfect bricks, I felt a special bond with my ancestors.

The work I did today, and the soreness I will probably feel tomorrow in my body makes me forever grateful to my great-great grandfather, whose love, labor and sweat brought the Motleys out of slavery and into freedom.

—Rheba Knox, assistant director of Training, Leadership Center

June 8, 2005
Vows to Keep

WHEN NINE MOREHOUSE College students went to South Africa to study ethical leadership and HIV/AIDS the trip was supposed to last 22 days, but during their last night in South Africa, the students found that their journey to studying leadership had just begun.

“I’ve been asking myself, what’s next? I have a new sense of who I am and who I’m going to become,” said Collier. “When we first arrived, I felt like I was back home for the first time. When I came to South Africa, I felt like there was a missing piece of me that had been found.”

“I was constantly told that coming to South Africa was going to be a life-changing experience, so I was open to...anything,” said Edwards. “Coming here took me to another level in life, period. I’m living life with new glasses. I came here to develop a greater appreciation for what I have, and I’ve certainly done that.”

After listening to everyone’s answers, Fluker challenged the group. “Make a pact,” he instructed. “There’s no way you can come here and have this experience and not say, ‘We agree to do something.’ What you decide to do, you must stick to it. “Second, there must be a defiant act of courage. If you’re not [disturbed] about what’s happening in South Africa, you’re not awake. You need to get busy...” Fluker admonished. And finally, he ended, “You must give back or else you’ve cursed yourself.”

—monet cooper

June 9, 2005
Caring for the Children

AFTER SINGING, dancing and laughing, the program started when Oprah arrived. Three of us—myself, Mark Rainey ’05, and Jamison Collier ’06—gave uniforms to all of the children.

Later, we went to an informal settlement, which is usually miles of one- to two-room shacks pieced together with whatever scraps the family can find to make the structure. We went to one of the shacks where nine children lived with their grandmother. The shack was barely the size of a normal full bathroom at my own home. It was normal for the children to go to bed without food. We gave the family food that would probably last them a week or two.

These experiences really put the finishing touch on a trip dedicated to understanding ethical leadership on a global level. South Africa has many emerging leaders who are skilled and driven to do well. However, South Africa still yields a racial and economic divide that makes it very difficult for these emerging leaders to affect change in a world that desperately needs their leadership.

—Clinton Fluker ’08

Oprah Winfrey (left) is presented a scrapbook of the trip by left to right: Clinton Fluker ’08, Jamison Collier ’06 and Mark Rainey ’05.

Continued on next page
June 7, 2005

Cry for a Beloved Child

“Oppression is worse than death” —Al Quran

AS WE ARRIVED for our last day of work with the children, they jubilantly shouted with joy and ran to greet us. The children, ages 3 to 7 years old, are very small for their ages.

When I first walked into the small nursery, I was horrified by the children’s drawings displayed on the wall. As a licensed professional counselor, I have received training with diagnostic evaluation of children through the analysis of their drawings. Without digression into a complex discussion of diagnostic testing, the children’s artwork reflected great pain, confusion and violence. I stood in front of their pictures, stunned by what I saw.

The pictures lacked symmetry and were often drawn in black and red colors, showing no identifiable structures. Their impoverished lives were clearly depicted in their drawings, and I stood for a long time immobilized by their confusion and pain.

—T.J. Prince ’75, associate director, Leadership Center
AFTER THEY RETURNED from the trip—the first six on June 9 and the last three on June 12—many students made personal mandates as to what they’d like to see happen in their own communities.

“I couldn’t have dreamed of a more empowering and enriching experience,” says Arthur Woodard ’05. “I’m glad I had a lot of education before I went, because it really prepared me...Seeing how [AIDS] affected the people who lived there gave me a greater appreciation for what I have here. For the little girl [at the Etafeni daycare who the volunteers say have AIDS], tomorrow isn’t promised because that little girl isn’t going to have a chance three years down the road.”

Woodard, who graduated with a computer science degree, is bringing what he learned during his South Africa experience to his hometown of Lake Charles, La. Since he has returned, Woodard has created an HIV/AIDS seminar for youth. His pastor has asked him to give a presentation on the deadly virus to the church’s youth and Woodard has kept busy with speaking engagements.

“For some reason, HIV/AIDS is a sensitive issue in the church,” Woodard’s pastor told him during a conversation about the ecumenical response to AIDS. “I don’t know why, Rev,” Replied Woodard, “cause right here, in my own church we’ve buried two people that I know of.”

Walter E. Fluker, executive director of the Leadership Center, observed in South Africa a different side to the young men he had come to know over the course of a semester. It was at Philani, a community center for children orphaned by HIV/AIDS.

“I was so touched by the men at Philani. It gave me such a sense of hope,” said Fluker of the volunteer work done by the Morehouse students. “There’s a soft side to leadership that is more powerful than the hard skills...which is dominated by our educational processes. The soft side suggests that we aren’t individuals; we are interrelated. If you want to get home, you have to give the other person a ride and for Africans and African Americans, our struggles are interconnected.”

Without question, the story of AIDS and the task of learning ethical leadership are more than studies in how a virus spreads at alarming rates in this sub-Saharan country. For nine Morehouse students, and their Butler University counterparts, they are the stories of South Africa’s history and the people who live, work and play there, who love their country and embrace the past with the same smiles they use to greet foreign visitors. Far away from Atlanta’s staples of red clay, sweet tea and the daily traffic that clogs many a commuter’s morning drive, these students found the stories of their own lives, their destinies.