

**Vice Chancellor, I have the honour to present, for the award of the degree of Doctor of Science in Medicine, honoris causa, David Mark Sanders.**

Enter the four horsemen of the apocalypse. Pestilence, War, Famine and Death. Pestilence carries a bow and wears a victor's crown, War brandishes a sword, Famine bears the grain-weighing scales and Death, pallid as a corpse, is empty handed<sup>[1]</sup>.

These four horsemen are mythical characters released as harbingers of the last judgement, inflicting their scourges onto the earth.

Most of the developed world lives as if immune to at least Pestilence and Famine<sup>[2]</sup>, but in the least developed world, the four horsemen constantly ride over the land.

David Sanders would add a fifth horseman to the list: Social Injustice.

Why do 13 million children still die each year from preventable causes? Why is health care not available to every individual in the world?<sup>[3]</sup> Why does Ethiopia import emergency rations to treat malnutrition whilst selling off prime land to food transnationals<sup>[4]</sup>? Why has South Africa's import of processed food products gone up exponentially<sup>[5]</sup>?

David Sanders has spent his life challenging the horsemen at their very source – Greed and Official Complicity.

He started a community clinic whilst he was still a fourth year medical student at Harare Hospital in the old Rhodesia. Later, whilst specialising in the UK, he became clearer about the bigger questions of politics and health. He started writing a pamphlet as a guide for health workers in developing countries. What he thought would take 3 weeks took 3 years<sup>[6]</sup> and turned into his book, "The Struggle for Health<sup>[3]</sup>". The book was published in 1985 and the key concepts are still relevant today:

That social inequities are the cause of health inequities; that access to health is a basic human right and that Health for All can only be attained through a more equitable distribution of wealth, resources, opportunity, and ultimately, power<sup>[7]</sup>.

He is a truth teller – forcing us to confront essential and difficult questions. He is resolute that medical solutions to illness are not solutions if people lack the power to determine their own destinies<sup>[8]</sup>. He is radical, outspoken and tenacious.

His contribution has been as a pioneer thinker around the necessity for a political understanding of health. He has been a role model and a visionary leader in the People's Health Movement, and, through the School of Public Health at the University of the Western Cape, he has helped to grow and develop entirely new paradigms of Public Health.

David Sanders is a challenger for the thundering hooves of the apocalyptic horses, doing so with Advocacy and Mobilisation as his weapons, and with Equity, Honour and Justice at his back.

**Vice Chancellor, I have the honour to invite you to admit to the degree of Doctor of Science in Medicine, honoris causa, David Mark Sanders.**

1. New World Encyclopedia. *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*. **2012**, viewed 30 May 2012; [Available from: [http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Four\\_Horsemen\\_of\\_the\\_Apocalypse](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Four_Horsemen_of_the_Apocalypse)].
2. Labonte, R.N., Schrecker T, Sanders D, Meeus W, Fatal Indifference: The G8, Africa and Global Health. **2004**: University of Cape Town Press.
3. Sanders, D. Carver, R., The struggle for health: medicine and the politics of underdevelopment. **1985**: Macmillan.
4. 1455fran. david@wcsdh2011.MTS, Prof David Sanders (People's Health Movement and the University of the Western Cape, South Africa) addresses the World Conference on Social Determinants of Health, Rio de Janeiro Brazil. 25 October **2011**; [Available from: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8DYy67nhc4>].
5. World Public Health Nutrition Association. *Determinants of disease, health and well-being. Rights, equity, justice: Rumpus in Rio*. 2011, viewed 28 May **2012**; [Available from: [http://www.wphna.org/2011\\_nov\\_hp2\\_social\\_determinants.htm](http://www.wphna.org/2011_nov_hp2_social_determinants.htm)].
6. Fawcus, S., *Personal Communication* 22 May **2012**.
7. Werner, D., Sanders, D. Weston, J., Questioning the Solution: The Politics of Primary Health Care and Child Survival with an In-depth Critique of Oral Rehydration Therapy. **1997**: HealthWrights.
8. Hirschhorn, N., Review of "Questioning the Solution". Questioning the Solution: The Politics of Primary Health Care and Child Survival with an In-depth Critique of Oral Rehydration Therapy, ed. D. Werner, Sanders, D., and Weston, J. **1997**.