



## RENOWNED STORYTELLER DR GCINA MHLOPHE GRIPS AUDIENCE WITH MAGICAL SONGS



**Dr Gcina Mhlophe (third from left) with staff from the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics.**

In celebration of Women's Month the [School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics \(SRPC\)](#) recently hosted an inspirational talk, titled: House of Song and Prayer by the legendary South African storyteller Gcina Mhlophe.

After an introduction by acting Dean and Head of the School of Arts [Professor Nobuhle Hlongwa](#), Mhlophe greeted those present with a beautiful song that set the scene for her presentation.

The focus of the lecture was on the role and place of women in religion (Christianity) in a patriarchal society. She demonstrated this through telling her story growing up in a home where prayer and song were central.

The female characters (mothers and aunts) were very important in her upbringing, and lessons learnt stayed with her all her life. Women, she felt, are the primary care-givers, nurturers, and educators of children. They transmit core values and morals to the young.

Mhlophe is thankful for being a woman. She emphasised that women have the privilege of being the first teacher to their child, 'they are a natural reservoir of love.' Mhlophe travels the world yet never forgets her mother's teachings.

She bemoaned the dominance of male symbols and examples (Moses, Paul Simon) in religious narratives and sermons. She advocated for greater appreciation of female characters like Rebecca, Esther, Ruth, etc. Such appreciation of female symbols, she claimed, is empowering to women.

The presentation was not only an intellectual academic exercise but also served to encourage young women to rise and take their place in society. Mhlophe's poetic words accompanied by song, gripped the audience's attention. Members of the audience were left encouraged and strengthened to seek the Creator in times of need and celebration.

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