



No Future Without Forgiveness

By Desmond Tutu

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The establishment of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission was a pioneering international event. Never had any country sought to move forward from despotism to democracy both by exposing the atrocities committed in the past and achieving reconciliation with its former oppressors. At the center of this unprecedented attempt at healing a nation has been Archbishop Desmond Tutu, whom President Nelson Mandela named as Chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. With the final report of the Commission just published, Archbishop Tutu offers his reflections on the profound wisdom he has gained by helping usher South Africa through this painful experience.

In **No Future Without Forgiveness**, Tutu argues that true reconciliation cannot be achieved by denying the past. But nor is it easy to reconcile when a nation "looks the beast in the eye." Rather than repeat platitudes about forgiveness, he presents a bold spirituality that recognizes the horrors people can inflict upon one another, and yet retains a sense of idealism about reconciliation. With a clarity of pitch born out of decades of experience, Tutu shows readers how to move forward with honesty and compassion to build a newer and more humane world.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Archbishop Desmond Tutu stands alongside Nelson Mandela as one of the most iconic figures of the struggle to end apartheid in South Africa. As archbishop of Cape Town throughout the 1980s, Tutu came to symbolize dignified, rational opposition to the iniquities of the apartheid regime, a faithful irreverence for unjust authority that led to his being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984. In 1995 he took up his greatest challenge, as chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the remarkable yet harrowing attempt by South Africans to come to terms with the gross violations of human rights committed throughout the apartheid era by offering amnesty and forgiveness rather than punishment and dismissal.

No Future Without Forgiveness is Tutu's remarkable personal memoir of his time as chair of the commission. It records his insistence of the need to discover a "third way" in the healing of the national psyche and his powerful belief that "we can indeed transcend the conflicts of the past, we can hold hands as we realize our common humanity." Tutu's characteristic humor, resilience, and compassion are evoked in a way that demonstrates how essential they have been to his unique political style--and his ability to get results where all others failed. He recalls the darkest days of apartheid's "vicious awfulness" when, preaching about God's authority, he was "frequently tempted to whisper in God's ear, 'For goodness sake, why don't You make it more obvious that *You are* in charge?'"

No Future Without Forgiveness could be profitably read alongside Antjie Krog's equally compelling *Country of My Skull*, as it considers the emotional toll that such a process of national soul-searching has had upon its participants. As Tutu himself points out, "It is a costly business to try to heal a wounded and traumatized people, and those engaging in that crucial task will perhaps bear the brunt themselves ... we were, in Henri Nouwen's celebrated phrase, 'wounded healers.'" --Rachel Holmes, *Amazon.co.uk*

From Publishers Weekly

This insightful book about South Africa's healing process is no simple feel-good tale. In 1995, Tutu was looking forward to a well-earned retirement from his role as Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town. He had given his life to the antiapartheid struggle and had spoken the truth to those in power so many times that, in 1984, he received the Nobel Peace Prize. Still, in 1996, President Mandela and others prevailed upon him to postpone retirement's pleasures to give South Africa one more thing: his leadership as chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Tutu speaks frankly of this call, of the struggle that preceded it and of the betrayals and jubilations of this unique commission. The TRC's work was unprecedented not only in its emphasis on restorative over retributive justice but in the spirituality that permeated its work, the bulk of which constituted hearings from the "victims" and "perpetrators" of apartheid. Ubuntu, Tutu explains, is the African expression that was at the heart of the TRC's labors. Meaning something like "a person is a person through other people," ubuntu sums up Tutu's philosophical framework for addressing apartheid's hard truths and beginning the reconciliation process necessary to move beyond apartheid's legacy. Despite the occasional factual inconsistency and some clichés (the book seems hastily written), Tutu's wisdom and experience come through. Human rights, he affirms, cannot stand without ubuntu's deeper foundation; the future cannot be without forgiveness.

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From Library Journal

Tutu, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984, retired as Archbishop of Capetown, South Africa, in 1998. Here, he reflects on the wisdom he gained as chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a group

formed to expose crimes committed under apartheid and to achieve reconciliation with South Africa's former oppressors.

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Users Review

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