

# **No Future Without Forgiveness Study Guide**

**No Future Without Forgiveness by Desmond Tutu**

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# Plot Summary

It is widely known that South Africa suffered under a brutal regime of forced segregation and fierce violence imposed on resisters from the early sixties until the early nineties. Political activist and long-time prisoner Nelson Mandela is released at this time and leads his party, the African National Congress, to victory in South Africa's first truly democratic election on April 27th, 1994. It is also widely known that Archbishop Desmond Tutu, a fellow Nobel Peace Prize winner and leader of the Anglican Church in South Africa, has something to do with the process.

No Future without Forgiveness explains Tutu's crucial role in leading South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission or TRC. Mandela creates TRC to publicize the profound human rights abuses under the apartheid regime. It not only describes Archbishop Tutu but also his concrete struggles, failures, and accomplishments as leader of the TRC.

As an Archbishop, Tutu views the struggle against apartheid in largely theological and spiritual terms, especially in Christian terms. Tutu stridently endorses the Christian view that God values all human life absolutely and that forgiveness is a necessary corrective for social peace and harmony. He backs his optimism with a conviction that Christ's death on the Cross showed that He would ultimately bring justice to the world, regardless of what evil the individuals may have done in the world as it is today. Most striking is Tutu's argument that Christianity requires that in many circumstances retributive justice or punishing wrongdoers for violating the law should be replaced with restorative justice. Restorative justice involves court action to reintegrate the perpetrator into society by reconciling him through confession to his community.

No Future without Forgiveness contains eleven chapters. In Chapter One, The Prelude, Tutu explains how the TRC is established and the "spiritual" experience of the 1994 vote. In Chapter Two, Nuremburg or National Amnesia? A Third Way, Tutu argues that the only way for the Mandela regime to avoid incredible bloodshed, retribution, and civil strife is to find a path between asking victims to forget the past and let perpetrators off the hook. Either choice will result in disaster. The point of the TRC is to hold perpetrators responsible as well as avoid the appearance of acting out of vengeance.

In Chapter Three, The Fullness of Time, explains some of the political background concerning the release of Mandela and how he comes to power, along with Tutu's belief that complete justice will come in the world through God's grace. Tutu responds to those who think that the TRC lets people off the hook by not seeking justice in Chapter Four titled What About Justice? In Chapter Five titled Up and Running, the author discusses the formation and first days of operation for the TRC. He also explains its Christian spiritual orientation.

Chapter Six reviews several victim hearings while Chapter Seven recounts the trial of Winnie Mandela's bodyguards, which is perhaps the most dramatic moment for the TRC. Chapter Eight explains how the TRC affects victims, and Chapter Nine explains

many of the stresses involved with running the TRC. Chapter Ten discusses the attitudes of perpetrators to the TRC while Chapter Eleven reinforces Tutu's main line of argument that the philosophy behind the TRC is the only way forward for South Africa.



# Chapter One, The Prelude

## Chapter One, The Prelude Summary and Analysis

April 27th, 1994 is the first day that black South Africans are allowed to vote. Archbishop Desmond Tutu is sixty-two years old and Nelson Mandela is seventy-six. Many people are afraid that there will be bloodshed as there has been before. Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) has threatened to stay out of the election with Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC). Prior struggles with the ANC have been gory and cost many lives, but on April 27th this is avoided.

Tutu decides to vote in a ghetto township that day in a show of solidarity with the poor Africans who have been systematically segregated. When Tutu becomes Archbishop in 1986, segregation is still in force. A Nobel Laureate and Metropolitan Archbishop, Tutu still cannot vote and needs a permit to live in his diocese. Of course, Tutu does not seek a permit and no charges are filed against him.

In the township of Gugulethu, an almost entirely black township, there is a very long wait to vote. The vote is still a media event. These previously faceless South Africans who have lived with their dignity as children of God that have been oppressed for a biologically irrelevant reason, now stand tall. The people are vulnerable to attack but nothing happens.

While in many countries voting is secular and mundane, the 1994 vote in South Africa is a spiritual experience. The black woman and man can exclaim that they are finally free and those with white guilt will finally have their burden lifted. The realization dawns on the citizens of the country that true freedom is indivisible and that no population can feel free while they oppress others.

The international community embraces South Africa with welcome. The people of South Africa are finally proud to travel. On May 10th, the day of the inauguration of Nelson Mandela, the war machines once used to oppress blacks fly overhead. Now they are "ours." The military is led by a former prisoner who is forgiving and magnanimous enough to invite his white jailer as his guest. The election is certified fair and free. Tutu thanks the world for their help.

Tutu has three primary goals for his tenure as archbishop. He wants to achieve the ordination of women, split his large Diocese into smaller ones, and liberate the people of South Africa. Women can be ordained in 1992 and the South African people are liberated in 1994. His second goal is not achieved. Tutu retires in 1996. Tutu later becomes the Dean of Johannesburg and writes the Prime Minister at that time, Mr. B. J. Vorster, to inform him of growing anger among blacks. Soon after, the town of Soweto explodes in violence. Tutu knew that his story will prevent him from retiring.



# Chapter Two, Nuremberg or National Amnesia? A Third Way

## Chapter Two, Nuremberg or National Amnesia? A Third Way Summary and Analysis

When apartheid ends, almost no one will admit to having defended it. No longer will blacks injured on the roadside be ignored because the ambulances that arrived are for whites. No blacks will be exiled to poverty-stricken lands due to segregation. The heartless social engineering of the Race Classification Boards ends where members of the same family are reassigned by hue.

The previous attitude embodied by Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd or the "high priest" of apartheid, who had created the segregated education system and became prime minister, is now under attack. He structured black education to prevent blacks from receiving any economic opportunities. However, such legislation can no longer be passed. There is a new Constitution in place that is oriented towards human rights along with a Constitutional Court.

The effects of apartheid however are hard to erase. Violence, murder, torture, and guerilla warfare that had occurred in the past decades still carry deep wounds. Examples include the Sharpeville Massacre of March 21st, 1960 where sixty-nine demonstrators were killed or the violence Soweto on June 16th, 1976, where a few dozen unarmed schoolchildren are shot for protesting

The South African people have to figure out how to deal with the past. They are never going to choose the Nuremberg paradigm or the method by which the Allies punished Nazi War criminals. First, the oppressors continue to live within the same country and this creates resentment that will later manifest itself. In any event, security forces still hold the guns which leaves the new government vulnerable. There is too large a burden on the judicial system and the peace is simply too fragile. Evidence for conviction is hard to come by and many would quickly lie, including former officials of high rank.

They could not let bygones be bygones with blanket amnesty either. Some after the Pinochet regime in Chile was overthrown, the despotic ruler wanted blanket amnesty. That is the wrong approach according to Tutu. For Tutu, while he supported Pinochet's extradition, he could not accept blanket amnesty. That would be adopting national amnesia. He says that forgetting the past will victimize the victims of apartheid twice.

Instead, the South African people find a third way. Individual amnesty can be sought if those who seek amnesty will make a full confession for the crimes they commit. This will be a form of social confession which will rehabilitate those who committed crimes and affirm the dignity of victims. Freedom will be exchanged for truth.



# Chapter Three, In the Fullness of Time

## Chapter Three, In the Fullness of Time Summary and Analysis

As Tutu argued in the previous chapter, dehumanization is reciprocal where it hurts the oppressor as well. To forgive is thus in one's self-interest. This chapter discusses how forgiveness comes about in South Africa. Tutu discusses many factors. First, it may simply have been "the right time" given how many factors come together at one time. Communism has fallen apart so the red-baiting of the anti-apartheid forces engaged in by the apartheid government is no longer effective. Prime Minister F. W. de Klerk takes over and rescinds the ban of reform organizations like the ANC. Tutu maintains that without this move there surely would have been a bloodbath. De Klerk convinced the white population that reconciliation is in their own interests.

Of course, Mandela is a dramatic historical force, even from prison. The dignity he shows and the reconciliation he seeks impress so many. He emerges from twenty-seven years in prison not as a broken and angry man but as a whole person. He thus has enormous credibility for his suffering.

The ANC however is not merely one organization led by Mandela. It is a large coalition of political groups that have existed since 1912. While the ideologies that comprise it run the gamut from Marxist to libertarian, all members agree to a participatory party structure. There are some revolutionary splinter groups focused on revenge however. Tutu lists a number of different figures and important leaders in addition to Mandela. Many black community leaders are educated in Christian Churches and the Christian churches contribute in many ways.

The Constitution contains in a postscript that will form a bridge in history between an oppressive past and a free future. It lays down the framework to make the transcendence of historical divisions secure.

# Chapter Four, What About Justice?

## Chapter Four, What About Justice? Summary and Analysis

Many people condemn the truth and reconciliation process (TRC) as immoral. The process asks the victims to give up the pursuit of retribution and justice for their families. Tutu disagrees.

The Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act specifies that anyone who commits a politically motivated crime between 1960 and 1994 can be granted amnesty after a full disclosure of relevant facts proportionate to the crime. Victims can support amnesty but remorse is not required. Most of the trials occur under television lights and public humiliation does ensue. Many families hear about the crimes of their family members for the first time. Marriages sometimes end abruptly.

Tutu reproduces the story of a young woman who dated a policeman who was participating in serious crimes as a member of a special unit task force. She is devastated when she finds out.

Amnesty is granted to anyone who pleads guilty. Many people think that justice is inherently retributive but the South Africans employ a model of restorative justice that aims to heal breaches. Victims are asked to pay a high price on behalf of the freedom from the past. The commission is not unpopular. In fact, those who craft the bill are self-interested politicians seeking reelection. They speak for the victims because the people want them to do so.

Next, Tutu reproduces a statement from Constitutional Court Judge Mohamed. He argues that the harms cannot be easily undone and that society must be reconstructed.

Tutu says that the main weakness of the bill lies in the granting of immediate immunity rather than immunity after several years in the system. The bill also recommends reparation grants but suffering cannot clearly be priced. There is also the stipulation that only those who testify can receive reparations in order to prevent abuse of the system. The commission is humbled by simple requests however, like tombstones for murdered children. While some may object to South Africa's path towards social justice, it has brought great social progress.





# Chapter Five, Up and Running

## Chapter Five, Up and Running Summary and Analysis

Archbishop Tutu is about to go on sabbatical when he is chosen to head up the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Mandela asks him and he feels that he cannot refuse. For three years, Tutu engages in devastatingly difficult work that is simultaneously exhilarating. He is nominated on December 15th right before Dingaan's Day, which is a day of racist commemoration of South African domination by the white population. December 15th is transformed into the Day of Reconciliation.

The first meeting of the TRC is held in Bishopscourt, which formerly was the venue of resistance meetings. It is also where Nelson Mandela stayed the first night following his freedom. The first meeting is diverse and includes people of all nations and creeds. Tutu briefly reviews the backgrounds of the various members. Mandela has to nominate nineteen judges to handle over seven thousand amnesty applications. Tutu originally suggests that everyone resign their party affiliations but the group protests that they are brought together as representatives of their factions. Tutu eventually agrees.

The TRC has to constantly emphasize that it is not presiding over a witch hunt. Many people however are suspicious. Hence, the first year of meetings is hell and full of constant fighting. While many of the members are lawyers, four ordained ministers are on the board for a reason. Mandela knew that reconciliation has to be spiritual. Everyone agrees with Tutu's initial suggestion that they all go on a spiritual retreat. So they have a day of silence. Tutu alerts the Anglican Communion of an urgent need for prayer.

The spiritual emphasis of the TRC is decidedly Christian. Tutu is challenged on his Christian emphases by the media, but Tutu tells them that he cannot be anyone else. In fact, for Tutu Christian theology is deeply relevant. Every individual must take responsibility for sin in front of God and blame cannot be pushed onto others. Christianity's strong distinction between deed and perpetrators is crucial as well. In Christianity, God gives up on no one and all behavior is constrained by the demands of love embodied in the Gospel of Jesus.

Jesus scandalized rulers and the prim and proper. He spent his time with people who are considered dregs of society. Salvation is all gift and grace is freely given from God. He loves all despite our sins. The same conditions that the oppressors faced might have made them oppressors as well because of sin. All of these Christian elements are hence deeply relevant for reconciliation. Tutu literally marvels at the extraordinary degree of forgiveness displayed by victims. Theology convinces Tutu that they all inhabit a moral universe. On the cross and in the resurrection, Jesus Christ proves that love is stronger than hate and light is stronger than darkness. In Tutu's mind, theology and the witness of Jesus show that everything will be brought to light. He sees many hidden and terrible secrets come out.

# Chapter Six, A Victim Hearing

## Chapter Six, A Victim Hearing Summary and Analysis

The TRC is charged with providing a complete picture of human rights violations. South African has been a "pigmentocracy," rule based on the pigment of skin, which is a totally arbitrary feature of human biology on which to base racial superiority. Apartheid supporters could not plead ignorance. They went to church, read the Bible, and pretended to be Christians. They deliberately missed those parts of the New Testament where the infinite worth of human beings are endorsed.

Tutu always sees the struggle for racial equality and freedom as a religious struggle. He and others act on the imperatives of their faith. As a child, however, Tutu grew up accepting apartheid. He saw blacks often arrested for not holding the appropriate passes. The most dehumanized aspects of racism arose through the "daily pinpricks" of humiliation. In fact, when Tutu becomes the Dean of Johannesburg, he has to be "endorsed" by the white population. Apartheid has engaged in an orgy of racist legislation from 1948 forward. Apartheid supporters demolish black townships, implement strict racial privileges and remove 3.5 million blacks from their homes. Even the cosmopolitan part of Cape Town is forcibly desegregated. Blacks are stripped of their rights and given a travesty of an education. Tutu sees the oppressed as a nation of survivors. He still sees all of humanity as intertwined.

The TRC is not in a position to give everyone who suffered under apartheid victim status. The period of worst oppression began shortly after the Sharpeville massacre in 1960 when resistance organizations were banned. President Mandela's inauguration however begins a new dispensation. The TRC has to focus on "gross" violating of human rights, which are somewhat arbitrarily defined. However if all South African segregationists are guilty of gross human rights violations, the TRC would have faced an impossible task. Instead, they enumerated four severe violations: killing, abduction, torture and severe ill treatment. The TRC has to be even-handed in assigning violators by granting amnesty to violent resisters as well.

They emphasize that legal equivalence is not moral equivalence. Nonetheless, they are criticized for criminalizing the liberation struggle. The TRC tries to reach out to as many South Africans as it can. It holds its first hearing in East London in April 1996 in a public event. Over 20,000 people send in statements that they want recorded. Many want to tell their stories, although sadly few whites come forward. Those who did are remarkable.

The TRC has to do what it can to help witnesses feel comfortable. The hearings are held in many venues to accommodate demand. Tutu notes that the TRC is not popular everywhere, as many people do not want their pasts exposed. On the first day of hearings there is a bomb scare. The TRC gives ample time to victims to tell their stories. Most witnesses privately testify and only few do so in public. In the beginning, Tutu and

other commissioners are apprehensive. They engage in interfaith dialogue to come to consensus. Tutu then prints his opening prayer from the first day of proceedings and his welcome statement. He discusses the purpose of the TRC as well its focus on unearthing the truth and healing wounds. The TRC will also do its best to be as open as possible.

The TRC's center is in Eastern Cape because the first race wars are fought there, and the first black resistance movements. They create a welcoming atmosphere. Tutu then reproduces several speeches and ends by claiming that the TRC makes it impossible for any South African to excuse his behavior by claiming not to know what happened.



# Chapter Seven, We Do Want To Forgive, But We Don't Know Whom To Forgive

## Chapter Seven, We Do Want To Forgive, But We Don't Know Whom To Forgive Summary and Analysis

Tutu wonders how God views humanity that he created. Human beings have utterly failed God's plan for them and have turned out much differently than God intended. Tutu has for a long time believed this but as chair of the TRC he sees it confirmed day after day, hearing horror after horror. Most of Chapter 7 is composed of testimonies given in the TRC of horrific acts. Numerous cases are presented, among the worst of which involve cremating murdered victims, smelling the smell of burning human flesh, and then going to a barbecue that afternoon. There are also cases of terrible mutilation during torture. In many cases, some black South Africans are pressed into infiltrating the African National Congress and often hired for benefits such as keeping their families kept safe.

The most striking part of the chapter is Tutu's discussion of the confessions of Winnie Mandel's bodyguards. At the time, Mr. and Mrs. Mandela are divorced. Mrs. Mandela has been free while Mandela is in prison. After a few short years together, they separate in 1992 and then divorce in 1996. In those four years, Mrs. Mandela's bodyguards commit many crimes, including ones that she is often clearly complicit in. They are involved in assaults and killings, which Winnie directly benefits from.

All of this shows Tutu that ordinary humans and even youth can do terrible things. Apartheid is evil and needs evil actions to sustain it. Many high level officials are involved in the violence and wickedness, including torture. During one day of testimony, Tutu is so affected and emotionally moved that he is on the verge of tears. By the end of the day, he breaks down and sobs like a child. The media focuses on him and many wonders whether he is the right man to head the council. Tutu prays not to cry publicly again. Tutu maintains that God could justly wipe out humanity but that God clearly has pride in his creation. There are many cases of nobility, love, and extraordinary good.

In some cases, due to anonymous crimes, the victims want to forgive but they did not know who to forgive. Many people are reintegrated into the community by public repentance. During apartheid, the ANC is despised and admittedly, there are bombings and so some members of the ANC have to go public with their sins as well. Everyone has the capacity for radical evil and radical good. While God may have partly regretted creating us, those who do great good can lighten the darkness that we have created.



# Chapter Eight, This Is My Brother, I Know These Shoes

## Chapter Eight, This Is My Brother, I Know These Shoes Summary and Analysis

Many are cynical about the TRC seeing it as sentimental. Tutu however believes that they forget that it avoids bloodshed and rescues the country from the brink of disaster. TRC is only ever meant to be part of the reconciliation process and not the whole. Many people do experience healing and many reveal their vulnerability in public.

One of the most extraordinary events in the history of the TRC is the trial that is held for Mrs. Mandela's bodyguards and football club who are clearly guilty of kidnapping and assault. Mrs. Mandela wants the hearing to be open so that she can publicly respond to allegations. Tutu maintains that Winnie is always amazing and that she suffered greatly for the cause of liberation and remained strong despite attempts by the South African government to break her spirit. She is a charismatic and powerful speaker as well. During her banishment, Tutu takes her communion. In Brandfort, where she is exiled, she raises political consciousness.

However, Mrs. Mandela's subsequent actions lead Tutu to believe that we should all be more modest in our claims about our capacities. He cannot exonerate Mrs. Mandela but is understanding enough to admit that anyone could buckle under pressure. Mrs. Mandela shows up to the hearings held for her men, along with many of her supporters that include members of the ANC Women's League, over which she presided as president.

Mrs. Mandela dismisses the testimony against her and hardly seemed affected. However, when a Bishop she knew testifies against her, she begins to buckle a bit. Tutu then speaks publicly and directly to her as a woman and asks her to apologize. She apologizes in a lukewarm way. Many people are dissatisfied but Tutu knows how hard it can be for such a proud woman to do so. Some criticize Tutu for giving her a way out.

In another story, Tutu explains that a group within the ANC called the UDF or United Democratic Front has a number of supporters that the government send police to attack. Unfortunately, the police does not understand the instructions given to them and kill eleven people, mostly women and children that are not involved. Brian Mitchell, one of the police officers, asks for forgiveness by going to the community directly. He suffers greatly for his sins. He loses his wife and he does not see his son for a long time.

A third story begins on August 31st, 1988 when a bomb explodes in Khotso House in Johannesburg, This is the location of the headquarters of the South African Council of Churches. No one is seriously injured. Adriaan Vlok, then Minister of Law and Order, blames the ANC for being atheistic communists. White South Africans believe it.



However, the TRC brings out the truth. Vlok testifies to being behind it. Tutu realizes that many deaths were the result of the system Vlok is a part of. It also comes to light that Vlok has been instructed to plant the bomb to discredit the ANC by Mr. P. W. Botha, who was the Prime Minister at the time. Further, terrible scientific experiments on live people are revealed as well as a botched attempt to poison Nelson Mandela with thallium.

In the final section of the chapter, Tutu informs the reader that he is invited to preach at a white Dutch Reformed Church which is the parish of many members of the former government. It has supported apartheid and provided a theological rationale for it previously. Later it abandons its position and apologizes publicly and wholeheartedly. This change makes Tutu feel that God is good. He admits that even his Anglican Church, despite totally rejecting racism, tolerates segregated parishes. Tutu receives a warm welcome at the church and tells the congregation that they do not need to choose between being masters or slaves and that they could help reorder society through reconciliation. Many weep during his sermon and Tutu is impressed by the change of heart.

In the end, the TRC does achieve a lot of good. Beyond anything, it helps victim families find peace. Many graves are opened to help families find peace and give their dead family members proper burials.



# Chapter Nine, Why The Heck Am I Doing This Thankless Job?

## Chapter Nine, Why The Heck Am I Doing This Thankless Job? Summary and Analysis

Tutu often wonders whether he should have his head examined for agreeing to chair the commission. Initially many of the commissioners try to establish their authority by staking out their turf to represent the coalitions they represent. Everyone acts like prima donnas.

Tutu again emphasizes that no one can be human alone. The worst thing about apartheid is that the rebels often become brutal themselves and sink to the same level as their oppressors. In fact, they internalize the oppressor's image of themselves. The oppressors make children of God doubt that they are children of God, which he says is a profound sin. The purpose of the commission is to heal this image.

However, the TRC faces many challenges throughout its existence. In the beginning, too many staff appointments are white, which casts the neutrality of the commission into doubt. Some nepotism has to be dealt with and unfortunately divides their early attention. The commission leaks secrets also like a sieve. However, Tutu has a good media director to help manage the fallout.

The TRC struggles to always avoid accusations of bias. It has difficulties in gaining the public's trust. The trust is several damaged when a commissioner is accused of complicity in a crime. It turns out to be a nightmare for Tutu. The impartiality and sanctity of the TRC process is put into danger. Tutu and the TRC immediately ask Mandela to appoint a judicial commission of inquiry. The President responds quickly. Eventually the accuser of the commissioner recants and apologizes for lying. The TRC is relieved and quickly lets the press know the details. Mandela is, in Tutu's mind, an amazing man. Mandela reaches out to the falsely accused commissioner personally out of concern.

The next crisis arises just as the TRC is going to issue its five volumes of findings to Mandela on October 29th, 1988. The TRC has to send notices to groups about whom they publish adverse findings. The ANC receives a notice for some crimes that they admit that some of their members have committed. While the ANC has previously expressed regret, they change their mind because they think that responding to the notices is now a waste of time. At Tutu's last meeting with the TRC, which is supposed to be wonderful, a commissioner suggested that the ANC's request for a special meeting be entertained.

However, in Tutu's mind, this is a terrible idea because giving a special hearing to the ANC would make the TRC look like lackeys of the ANC. The credibility of the commission is on the line. Luckily, after a vote, the request is denied. The ANC then

tries to block publication of the findings, since many members do not want their crimes on record. However, the ANC court application for an injunction is dismissed. While the findings are still published, celebration is muted. Tutu is thankful to Mandela for his grace in handling the situation and thankful to God for manifesting His grace through the process.





# Chapter Ten, We Did Not Know

## Chapter Ten, We Did Not Know Summary and Analysis

It is shocking that supposedly civilized white South Africans could turn such a blind eye to obvious injustice. The white Afrikaner minority could have easily ended apartheid. However, many grow up knowing no other system and accept it because it is comfortable and familiar. The system of racism is not naïve but actually turns out to be quite sophisticated. Blacks are isolated in townships that whites will not encounter unless they go out of their way.

Apartheid supporters cannot be found today. However, the TRC wants to know why whites cooperate with the same. Many people responsible do not respond to the TRC requests for hearings on why they acted as they did. For those who do come, whites turn out to be quite defensive. They see anti-apartheid movements as a Communist onslaught, but there is some variance in white responses. Racism runs deep in South African life. Freedom fighters are called terrorists and newspapers officially against apartheid apply it to their newsrooms. Government always knew what apartheid was. South Africans come to prize conformity and not questioning the existing system. A racist ideology prevails. The president could control whether stories he did not like were aired.

Faith communities however are more forthcoming about testifying before the TRC. Tutu then reviews the professions that resisted. Whites tend to confuse obeying the law with being moral. They are usually outraged at the idea that they should have disobeyed immoral laws. Many refuse to resign their positions under apartheid for fear that someone worse would replace them. However, South African institutions are being transformed, including the judiciary. Tutu also notes that women are a major part of ending apartheid and that it cannot be done without their support.

Human beings are capable of beautiful acts but they are flawed. The TRC is not infallible and has many weaknesses. For Tutu, the greatest weakness of the TRC is in not attracting too many white citizens to the community. Whites do not have a leader that can motivate them. There are also weaknesses in the process and the TRC and the Amnesty committee do not always work well together. They have some success with the old regime's police force but little success with the military.

The South African Defense Force was previously utilized by President Botha as part of his "total strategy" to stop "Communism." The State Security Council ruled South Africa. This organization was supported by Britain and the United States during the Cold War because they were in the habit of supporting any government that officially opposed Communism. Tutu had previously met with both American President Ronald Reagan and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher but to no avail. Both regimes supported oppression.



Due to apartheid terrorism, 1.5 million people died, 4 million people became refugees, and \$60 billion of the South African economy was destroyed, as were over one hundred thousand elephants and rhinos. Tutu then discusses the effects the apartheid government had on other countries and the public language of the military that contained code words for terrible acts. The State Security Council surely must have foreseen the consequences of their behavior despite blaming Botha's small clique for everything that went wrong.

Tutu visits Mr. Botha to try to get him to testify in front of the TRC for its symbolic and real significance. Tutu has encountered Botha on many previous occasions. In one meeting in 1988, Tutu tries to convince Botha to spare the lives of six people on death row, but while Botha was initially friendly, he launches into bitter attacks on Tutu. Tutu did not know quite how to respond.

In the years since their last meeting, Botha however has suffered a stroke and is pushed out of office by his cabinet and future President de Klerk. Botha is over eighty years old by this time. When Tutu meets with him, Botha is friendly and agrees to cooperate. President Nelson Mandela also goes out of his way to accommodate him. Mr. Botha responds to the TRC's questions at his own pace, even though the TRC has the authority to coercively subpoena him.

Botha is convicted of the accusations. He is given a suspended jail sentence and fined. His stubbornness and anger on display in the courtroom make him look pathetic. Tutu then maintains that he bears no animus against de Klerk.

Apartheid has powerful effects on people. Tutu is not shocked that whites are complicit, but he is surprised that whites adopt such terribly racist attitudes. Conditioning is powerful however, and Tutu admits to even being somewhat conditioned to think negatively of his own race. He feels very sad by this brainwashing. Tutu comes away from the TRC with a strong belief in the power of humans to choose good nonetheless.



# Chapter Eleven, Without Forgiveness There Really Is No Future

## Chapter Eleven, Without Forgiveness There Really Is No Future Summary and Analysis

Tutu visits Rwanda right after the genocide ended in the mid-90s as president of the All Africa Council of Churches. There are many crises in the nations of the AACC membership. When Tutu confronts these tragedies in person, he often breaks down and cry. Rwanda teaches him that racism is not the only cause of genocide. In Rwanda, it is a conflict of black against black. Tutu preaches wherever he goes that people must turn from retributive to restorative justice to heal.

Tutu is not clear about why so many who are so wounded listen to him. He thinks it is because his work in South Africa gives him credibility. People know about the TRC and listen to Tutu as an oracle as a result. Tutu says that God wants humans to live in friendship and harmony. Thus human history should be seen as a quest for harmony, friendship, and peace. God will ultimately reverse all disunity and hatred. The Cross shows that victory is beyond doubt.

Many groups hear Tutu's message. However, this message is very unpopular in Israel when Tutu criticizes the Israeli treatment of Palestinians. He is apprehensive about returning but in the late '90s, many Israeli citizens are interested in hearing his message. Again, his work in South Africa lends him credibility.

Perpetrators must acknowledge the truth of their sins. Many people however do not want to expose their vulnerability. However, the past cannot be ignored. Tutu cautions that forgiveness does not mean forgetting the crime, condoning it, or becoming sentimental about it. Perpetrators do not need the victim's forgiveness although it helps.

Reconciliation is in jeopardy in South Africa due to the massive wealth inequalities between whites and blacks that has been created by apartheid. This stands a constant reminder of a history of oppression. Economic development is therefore necessary.

Tutu worries about speaking on behalf of apartheid victims because he does not want to assume that he speaks for everyone. He still emphasizes that forgiveness must be the right path because the worst sins of the past cannot be otherwise dealt with. Tutu argues that people should use temperate language in conflicts and remember that negotiations are often held between those who dislike each other. He affirms that peace is possible and that what happened in South Africa shows it. He says that there is no future without forgiveness because the people cannot move on unless they forgive.

# Postscript

## Postscript Summary and Analysis

In the postscript, Tutu notes that TRC workers and commissioners are encouraged by mental health staff to have a support system and to take vacations. He also encourages them to deal with their feelings in order to stay disciplined and focused and not to disintegrate. Nonetheless, many are still personally shattered, particularly interpreters that have to put the atrocities into their own words.

Tutu finds out that he has prostate cancer in 1997 and thereby feels the cost of his work. His cancer helps him become more laid back and to acquire a new appreciation and intensity for life. It also helps him to identify with all the sinners in the world as a wounded healer.



# Characters

## Archbishop Desmond Tutu

The author of *No Future without Forgiveness*, Desmond Mpilo Tutu is born in 1931 and becomes the Archbishop of Cape Town and leader of the Anglican Church in South Africa. Tutu ranks among the most important opponents of apartheid in South Africa, perhaps second only to Nelson Mandela. He receives the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984. He is known for his outspoken advocacy of human rights, speaking out against AIDS, poverty, and racism.

In this book, Tutu discusses his primary role as chair of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission or TRC. The TRC is responsible for granting amnesty from prosecution to people who engaged in gross violations of human rights under apartheid in exchange for a full confession of their crimes.

Tutu is widely known as an outspoken, warm, quirky, and forceful communicator and activist. He regularly travels the world on behalf of numerous humanitarian causes but he considers his chairmanship of the TRC as one of the most challenging tasks in life. Tutu describes the great stress factors involved in organizing the commission and getting it up and running. Confessions of human rights abuses are often heart-breaking and nauseating. They cause a great amount of anguish. Tutu often struggles to not cry. At one event, he breaks down into tears at the horror of it all.

As an author, Tutu comes across as a deeply committed individual who has a respect for human dignity. He understands human dignity in explicitly Christian terms, often speaking in terms of radical forms of forgiveness, the natural proclivity of humans towards sin, and the possibility of profound spiritual redemption.

## President Nelson Mandela

Nelson Mandela is born in 1918 and is President of South Africa between 1994 and 1999. His election is the first one involving a complete electoral vote of the entire adult South African population. Mandela becomes political as soon as the Afrikaner-dominated national party is elected in 1948 and imposes apartheid policies. Due to non-aggressive anti-apartheid activities earlier in his life, Mandela is charged on a number of crimes and imprisoned for twenty-seven years.

When Mandela is given his freedom in 1990, he fights vigorously to avoid a bloodbath of revenge against Afrikaner oppression and on behalf of forgiveness and peace. A few years later, he leads the African National Congress to democratic victory. It is through Mandela's leadership that the modern-day multiracial South African democracy is created. In 1993, Mandela wins the Nobel Peace Prize and receives innumerable awards.



In the book, Tutu praises Mandela and sees him as a spiritual leader of the South African people. He praises Mandela for an acute sensitivity not only to the machinations of political life but to the spiritual nature of the struggle against apartheid. Tutu admires Mandela deeply and only takes on the role of leading the TRC because Mandela asks him to serve. Throughout the book, Tutu presents many examples of how Mandela fights for justice and peace and helps South Africa avoid civil war.

## **Winnie Madikizela-Mandela**

Mandela's second wife, Winnie does not share her husband's advocacy of non-violence. After divorcing Mandela, Winnie comes under scrutiny for the actions of her bodyguard and boyfriend, Jerry Richardson. Richardson accuses Winnie of ordering murder and kidnapping. He and her other bodyguards are also accused of crimes as well. Winnie comes to the trial of her bodyguards at the TRC and Tutu reaches out to her personally.

## **Frederick Willem de Klerk**

This individual is the last president of the apartheid-era South African government who ends the ban on the ANC and releases Mandela from prisoner. De Klerk is also awarded the Nobel Peace Prize with Mandela.

## **Pieter Willem Botha**

The president of South Africa between 1984 and 1989, Botha is the last powerful defender of the apartheid system. Tutu knows Botha well and is able to convince him to come before the TRC. Although he refuses to testify, Botha stands trial to hear accusations against him.

## **The African National Congress**

This is South Africa's governing party that was once a banned activist organization. Mandela becomes the leader of the party and its ruling coalition when he is president.

## **The Apartheid Regime**

Coming to power in 1948, the apartheid regime imposes brutal segregation laws that treat white Afrikaners as superior to South African blacks.



## **Afrikaners**

This group consists of Afrikaans-speaking ethnic group that are descended from Western Europeans, mainly Dutch. They are the ruling class of South Africa during apartheid.

## **Jesus Christ**

This individual is called the Savior and God in the Christian religion. Tutu considers himself a follower of Jesus and an advocate of his social philosophy.

## **Victims**

Tutu encourages victims to forgive their perpetrators as a way of moving forward. He is also moved by many of their efforts to forgive and get on with their lives.

## **Perpetrators**

Tutu presses perpetrators to liberate themselves from their sins through confession. Some repent although many do not.

## **Resistance Fighters**

Many of the resistance fighters commit crimes themselves and Tutu sees a great sadness in the fact that they become like their oppressors.



# Objects/Places

## South Africa

This is the country whose social institutions are the focus of the book.

## Bishopscourt

This is the site of many resistance meetings and where Mandela spends his first night of freedom.

## Cape Town

Tutu is the Archbishop of Cape Town.

## Johannesburg

Tutu serves as Bishop of Johannesburg before becoming an Archbishop.

## The Sharpeville Massacre

Occurring March 21st, 1960, South African police kill a large number of black protesters. Tutu believes that this event marks the beginning of the severe abuses of the apartheid era. The TRC consider this event as the beginning of the period where they will grant amnesty for gross human rights abuses.

## The Election of 1994

In 1994, Mandela is elected President of South Africa in a valid and democratic election.

## The Truth and Reconciliation Commission

This is the commission that is led by Tutu and is charged with the task of granting amnesty for human rights abuses under apartheid in exchange for public confessions.

## Human Rights Abuses

If the TRC define human rights abuses too broadly, they will have to charge too many people with crimes. Thus, the TRC enumerates four gross human rights abuses that





they will concern themselves with. They are killing, abduction, torture, and severe ill treatment.

## **Apartheid**

This is the legal system of racial segregation that the White National Party enforces in South Africa between 1948 and 1994.

## **Racial Purity Ideology**

The apartheid regime amplifies a long-time belief in the racial superiority of whites in South Africa called radical purity ideology. Tutu points to its many evil effects, particularly in conditioning the minds of both white and black South Africans.

## **Christian Forgiveness**

Tutu is an ardent defender of the Christian concept of forgiveness as the way forward for South Africa.

## **Human Worth**

Tutu believes that God endows human beings with infinite human worth and that as a result, they must be treated as free and equal moral persons capable of great goodness and forgiveness.

## **Justice**

Despite his emphasis on forgiveness, Tutu thinks that justice is important. He recognizes however that pushing for a retributive conception of justice will tear South African apart. Instead, he defends a policy of restorative justice.

# Themes

## The Wickedness in Humanity

Tutu notes that in a report entitled *Apartheid Terrorism*, which is published in October 1989, the destabilization caused by the South African Defense Force. This is responsible for the deaths of 1.5 million people, 4 million refugees, the destruction of \$60 million USD in assets, and the deaths of 100,000 elephants and rhinos between 1980 and 1988. The brutality of social activity is staggering and Tutu wonders how human beings are capable of sustained cruelty and wickedness on such a scale.

*No Future without Forgiveness* is a study in human wickedness. The apartheid regime is based on racial hatred where it uproots families, kills resistors, and impoverishes millions in the name of race. Race is a morally arbitrary feature of a human person. The racism propagated by the apartheid government is so powerful that it conditions blacks and whites however to think of whites as superior to blacks. Tutu even admits that he has been subject to such conditioning.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission reveals some of the most disgusting and heart-breaking human rights abuses. Special Forces would often kill resistors in secret without a trial. Human corpses are left in large piles and burned, while the smell of burning flesh spreads throughout towns and the countryside. Segregation is fiercely and efficiently enforced by law. Black townships are created that effectively hide them from view so that white townships do not have to see them. When these sins are confessed, Tutu struggles to hold back tears and on several cases breaks down, including one time where he cries in front of the entire commission.

Tutu wonders why God allows humanity to become so corrupt and why he does not wipe the slate clean and start over.

## The Goodness in Humanity

Tutu's Christian theology teaches him that the universe is fundamentally moral in character. The universe is good and it naturally tends towards good despite the fact that the Earth is corrupted by sin. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ show Tutu that God Himself places incredible value on human life. Human beings therefore have incredible worth that requires others to treat them as equals and as subjects of love, mercy, and grace.

Despite all the evil in the world, Tutu believes that man's redeeming quality is his capacity for extraordinary acts of goodness. Perpetrators often repent for their crimes when they come before the TRC. The TRC does its best to bring crimes to light to get justice for victims. Tutu recounts several stories of those who commit terrible crimes including murder and torture. These individuals plead for forgiveness and desperately want to be reintegrated into their communities.



The reaction of many victims who testify before the TRC really displays the human capacity for good. Some victims are prepared to forgive their oppressors often for terrible crimes that would otherwise seem unforgivable. Tutu recounts these profound acts of forgiveness in detail because they move him deeply. They also represent to him the real presence of God's grace in the world.

For Tutu, God's goodness already triumphs over death on the Cross. Evil has already lost and in the end, love will conquer hate. In this life and in this world, we do our best to fight against evil, always hoping for triumph due to God's aid and our free choice of good over evil.

## **No Future without Forgiveness**

The title of Tutu's book is No Future without Forgiveness and Chapter 11, the final chapter, is entitled "There Really is No Future without Forgiveness." The titles represent Tutu's social philosophy and theology as the chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and is the main theme of the book. When the apartheid government is removed from power, many blacks want revenge, and some want bloody revenge. In contrast, many whites refuse to admit wrongdoing and are ready to violently resist if they are attacked or if they are to become second-class citizens. South Africa sits on the brink of civil war.

Retributive justice or punishing perpetrators for their crimes in proportion to their crime simply because they commit injustices, would have proved disastrous in South Africa. It would have been viewed as the arbitrary imposition of black power over whites. Tutu believes that the only way forward for South Africa is to replace retributive justice with restorative justice. Restorative justice focuses not on punishment but on reintegrating perpetrators and sinners into their communities and into the human community as a whole.

The challenge of restorative justice is that many think that it downplays the seriousness of injustice. Tutu fights back against this criticism. Through confession and reintegration, the crime is taken very seriously. The act is brought to light and the perpetrator is made the clear subject of blame. This process also requires a fundamental change in the heart of the perpetrator. However, it also asks a great deal of the victim but Tutu believes that asking the victim to forgive is the only way for them to be liberated from their pain and move forward. The reason that there is no future without forgiveness is that it is the only way forward for South Africa given its historical circumstances.

# Style

## Perspective

Archbishop Desmond Tutu's perspective combines those of a pastor and theologian with that of a human rights activist. Tutu has served as an Anglican priest for decades. As a theologian and priest, he has a deeply Christian worldview. He sees the world as fundamentally moral, which is to say that the world is good and that the unjust are eventually stopped and punished or redeemed. He believes that God came to earth as Jesus Christ and demonstrated that all human beings have profound moral worth. Jesus Christ did not make arbitrary distinctions between persons like race, class, and gender to affect or diminish that worth. Tutu stays that those who assert themselves as superiors over others are opposed by God Himself.

Tutu is also an ardent advocate of grace and forgiveness over and above revenge and retribution. While many criticize him for downplaying the importance of justice, Tutu argues that he is serving a higher set of values that more effectively promote the common good and the gospel of love than retributive justice that would likely tear South Africa apart if it was implemented.

Tutu's work as a human rights activist gives his theology a deeply practical application. Tutu unabashedly approached the advocates of apartheid when the regime is in power and challenged them. He took his complaints directly to Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher when they are in power and publicly champions the cause of Nelson Mandela. He fights vigorously against sexism, homophobia, AIDS, and poverty. He fights vigorously against the effects of racism worldwide. All of his fights are however rooted in a deeply theological worldview.

## Tone

Desmond Tutu has a unique personality that combines compassion, justice, love and mercy for all of humanity. He also reveals impatience with those who accommodate or commit injustice that gives his tone a certain piskiness. Tutu also has a well-developed and almost child-like sense of humor that is deeply theological and often concerns the absurdity and arbitrariness of injustice and racism.

For instance, Tutu relates how he would demonstrate the absurdity of racism by comparing dividing society along racial lines similar to dividing groups of people along the size of noses. He then points out that by having a larger nose, he might still be discriminated against.

Thus the tone of *No Future without Forgiveness* combines all of these personality traits into a unique experience for the reader. Tutu seamlessly combines gentle and tender feelings for those who are suffering, and amazement at the human capacity for



goodness and evil, while recounting the deep tragedy of witnessing apartheid and the heart-breaking confessions of perpetrators at the TRC.

The reader encounters Tutu's rage coupled with a sense of his own humility when he confronts human sin. His frustration comes out when he is unable to get Winnie Mandela to take responsibility for her crimes, to get former President Botha to testify before the TRC or to get Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher fight apartheid in South Africa.

## Structure

No Future without Forgiveness is structured into eleven chapters with a short postscript. The chapters are arranged somewhat chronologically and by distinct subjects so that a narrative forms but a number of themes are covered. Chapter One, The Prelude, begins with the election of 1994 and the formation of the TRC. It also explains a lot of the cultural, historical, and social context for the significant "spiritual" experience of the election. Chapter Two, Nuremburg or National Amnesia? A Third Way, describes Tutu's philosophy of reconciliation for South Africa, which tries to avoid both revenge and ignoring injustice by embracing the idea of restorative justice. The chapter also covers the early organization and structuring of the TRC.

Chapter Three, The Fullness of Time, returns to the background surrounding Mandela's imprisonment and release and discusses Tutu's theological conception of social justice. Chapter Four, What About Justice, raises some of the criticisms the TRC received, particularly criticisms that the commission's conception of restorative justice is not justice at all. Chapter Five, Up and Running, covers the early days of the TRC and displays its Christian social philosophy.

Chapter Six gets into the details of victim hearings and Chapter Seven focuses specifically on Winnie Mandela's trial, which was a pivotal moment in the history of the TRC, particularly with respect to maintaining legitimacy. Chapter Eight discusses the impact of the TRC on victims and Chapter Nine probes the mental stresses involved in being a commissioner. Chapter Ten explains the psychology, attitudes, and behavior of perpetrators while Chapter Eleven concludes with a discussion of the basic themes of Tutu's social philosophy and a plea for his idea of restorative justice. The postscript reviews some of Tutu's engagements following his chairmanship of the TRC.

## Quotes

"The day had finally dawned when we would vote, when we could vote for the first time in a democratic election in the land of our birth. I had waited until I was sixty-two years old before I could vote. Nelson Mandela was seventy-six. That was what would happen today, April 27th, 1994" (Chapter 1, pg. 3.)

"Nelson Mandela was duly elected President by the first democratically elected National Assembly of the new South Africa" (Chapter 1, pg. 11.)

"The school must equip the Bantu to meet the demands which the economic life will impose on him .... What is the use of teaching a Bantu child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice? ... Education must train and teach people in accordance with their opportunities in life..." (Chapter 2, pg. 16.)

"And that third way was granting amnesty to individuals in exchange for a full disclosure relating to the crime for which amnesty was being sought" (Chapter 2, pg. 30.)

"The true leader must at some point or other convince her or his followers that she or he is in this whole business not for self-aggrandizement but for the sake of others. Nothing is able to prove this quite so convincingly as suffering" (Chapter 3, pg. 39.)

"In order to advance such reconciliation and reconstruction, amnesty shall be granted in respect of acts, omissions and offenses associated with political objectives and committed in the course of the conflicts of the past" (Chapter 3, pg. 46.)

"Our freedom has been bought at a very high price" (Chapter 4, pg. 55.)

"Those of us who struggled against apartheid have been vindicated in the most spectacular fashion. And the victory was for all of us, black and white together—the rainbow people of God. It was theology that enabled me to assert that this was a moral universe. That theology undergirded my work in the TRC" (Chapter 5, pg. 87.)

"Thus the proponents of apartheid really could have had no excuse for their peculiar doctrine. The Bible they read and which we read is quite categorical—that which endowed human beings, every single human being without exception, with worth, infinite worth, is not this or that biological or any other extrinsic attribute. No, it is the fact that each one of us has been created in the image of God. This is something intrinsic" (Chapter 6, pg. 92-93.)

"No one in South Africa could ever again be able to say, 'I did not know,' and hope to be believed" (Chapter 6, pg. 120.)

"The point I am making, though, is that ordinary human beings, even youth, could be the perpetrators of some quite ghastly actions. And because apartheid was intrinsically evil and immoral, in and of itself, almost by definition it had to use equally evil and immoral methods to sustain itself" (Chapter 7, pg. 142.)



"We do want to forgive but we don't know whom to forgive" (Chapter 7, pg. 149.)

"I beg you, I beg you, I beg you please-I have not made any particular finding from what has happened here. I speak as someone who has lived in this community. You are a great person and you don't know how your greatness would be enhanced if you were to say 'Sorry, things went wrong, forgiven me.' I beg you" (Chapter 8, pg. 174.)

"This is my brother. I know those shoes. I bought them for him" (Chapter 8, pg. 192.)

"Tragically, those opposing apartheid frequently became brutalized themselves and descended to the same low levels as those they were opposing" (Chapter 9, pg. 197.)

"We were frail and fallible, veritable earthenware vessels as St. Paul puts it, so that it would be clear that the superabundant glory belonged to God" (Chapter 9, pg. 213.)

"Any woman who wants to be equal to a man has no ambition" (Chapter 10, pg. 230.)

"After the grueling work of the commission I came away with a deep sense-indeed an exhilarating realization-that, although there is undoubtedly much evil about, we human beings have a wonderful capacity for good. We can be very good. That is what fills me with hope for even the most intractable situations." (Chapter 10, pg. 253.)

"Our experiment is going to succeed because God wants us to succeed, not for our glory and aggrandizement but for the sake of God's world. God wants to show that there is life after conflict and repression-that because of forgiveness there is a future" (Chapter 11, pg. 282.)

"Yes, I have been greatly privileged to engage in the work of helping to heal our nation. But it has been a costly privilege for those of us on the commission and I have come to realize that perhaps we were effective only to the extent that we were, in Henri Nouwen's celebrated phrase, 'wounded healers'" (Postscript, pg. 287.)



## Topics for Discussion

Explain the formation of the apartheid government in South Africa. Explain the events that led to its overthrow and replacement.

Who is Nelson Mandela? Why is he central to the struggle for South African liberation? Explain in detail.

Explain Archbishop Tutu's role in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and his interpretation of their guiding philosophy.

How does Tutu mix Christian theology and his work at the TRC? Give three examples.

Review two criticisms of the TRC in detail. Do you agree with them or not?

Do you think Tutu is right that the path of forgiveness is the only way forward for South Africa?

What is your opinion of Tutu's social philosophy with respect to ethnic and national conflict? Give one argument for and one argument against Tutu's positions and end your essay with your explanation of which is correct.