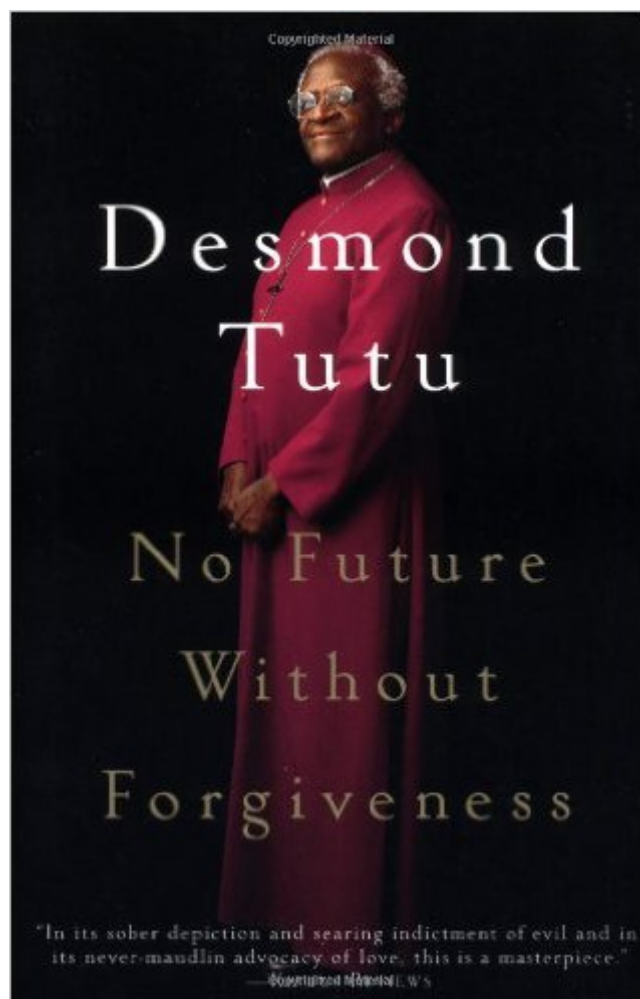


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No Future Without Forgiveness



Synopsis

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.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I interviewed Desmond Tutu in Atlanta just before the release of the book, which he wrote at the rate of one chapter a week; towards the end of the interview I asked him if he thought his prostate cancer had been either caused by or accelerated by South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. So much horror, surely, needs an outlet? "Oh, yes," he said, as the warm rain cascaded down outside the studio, "it's had its effect all right. But I am still full of wonder. And I am

so grateful that I have lived through it all." By this he means living through apartheid, preventing a necklacing-in-progress, welcoming Nelson Mandela on his first day out of 27 years' of incarceration, being one of the clerics to swear in South Africa's first democratically elected President - and marrying the 80 year-old man on his birthday. Tutu is a humble man, although he calls himself vain; the book displays little vanity. What it displays is a shining, unequivocal message for the next century: we need to search for a new worldwide morality, a new sense of ethics. If we don't, be sure that somewhere, another South Africa will emerge. He spares few people in this sometimes horrifying book: white South Africans who have not responded with generosity to the changes in the country, Nobel Peace Prize winner FW de Klerk, who instigated the change in South Africa; the generals of the past, the mean and the miserly. He sheds light on the behind the scenes tensions of the TRC, surely a microcosm of the new South Africa as it seeks to integrate. He reveals that he nearly resigned at one point; he explains his rage when the final report of the TRC was placed in jeopardy within hours of its release; how he fought to subdue his tears as horror story followed upon horror story. Of these, there are mercifully few in this book, although the voice of the victims shines through on page after page. They want so little, he explains, perhaps just a son's bones so they can be buried with honour. The book is one of massive integrity and a moral message for the future which is upon us.

Desmond Tutu brings us all a poignant and beautiful portrayal of how love for your neighbor, and forgiveness of injustices must prevail over getting back and fighting, because "there is no future without forgiveness." His journey was not an easy one, however, with a solid spiritual base, and an extemporary model of sustained dedication to the indwelling truth in his heart, he was able to lead a nation out of apartheid, and into peace and equality. His humanness and depth make this book one to refer back to, and his model of spiritual equality for all people one to follow for us all. Deserves 10 Stars! Barbara Rose, author of "Stop Being the String Along: A Relationship Guide to Being THE ONE" and 'If God Was Like Man' Editor of inspire! magazine

As I read this, I thought: this must be unusual for fellow Americans to read. We have tended to be a people obsessed with forms of revenge, retribution, surveillance, and punishment we euphemize as "justice" and, since the Bush administration took over, "state security." Ironically, those who pass for followers of the man who said to "love your enemies" have been among the most determined supporters of eye-for-an-eye, letter-of-the-law, and, most recently, preemptive strike. In this book the former Archbishop of Capetown has given us not only an eye-opening account of the brutalities and

intricacies of post-Apartheid justice, but a model for moving beyond the various forms of institutionalized retribution. Pointing out the unworkability of trying and sentencing perpetrators of apartheid, he describes the joys and difficulties of the "truth and reconciliation" approach to justice: the granting of political amnesty to those who make a full confession of their crimes. An additional beauty of the process is its openness to the stories of those who were victimized, many of whom have been willing to pass up the opportunity for legal revenge in order to speak about their sufferings to those who were responsible for them. Although this amnesty--as opposed to what Tutu calls "amnesia," the denial approach to the past--has not been a perfect solution to the fallout of apartheid, it has offered the world a model of reconciliation at the level of the trans-punishment consciousness of a Gandhi, a Jesus, a Martin Luther King Jr. For that reason alone it bears study by readers who are ready for alternatives to the cycles of retribution that inundate the world even now with ever-widening circles of "moral" warfare and all the rest of the self-justifying brutality that only creates new injustices.

After the fall of apartheid in South Africa, a remarkable shift occurred. Rather than forming war crimes tribunals, rather than whitewashing or ignoring the past, the democratically-elected government, led by President Nelson Mandela, formed a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In exchange for amnesty, those guilty of war crimes were required to appear before the commission and make a complete and full disclosure of any and all atrocities committed, receiving in turn a full pardon. This is extremely difficult and painful reading. The atrocities are grisly, and I only had to read about them, not listen to them, nor experience them. In clear, unvarnished prose, Archbishop Tutu covers the difficulties in forming and leading such a commission, the differences and problems the commission members themselves had, and the response to it on the part of South African citizens. Yet, with all of the limitations Archbishop Tutu outlines, this was a remarkable, hopeful, amazing process, unlike any in human history. The book concludes with a fascinating, intriguing discussion on the nature of forgiveness. A wonderful, painful and inspiring book: one that shares the best and worst of the human condition, written by a great moral leader of our time. This book should be required reading for every human being alive.

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