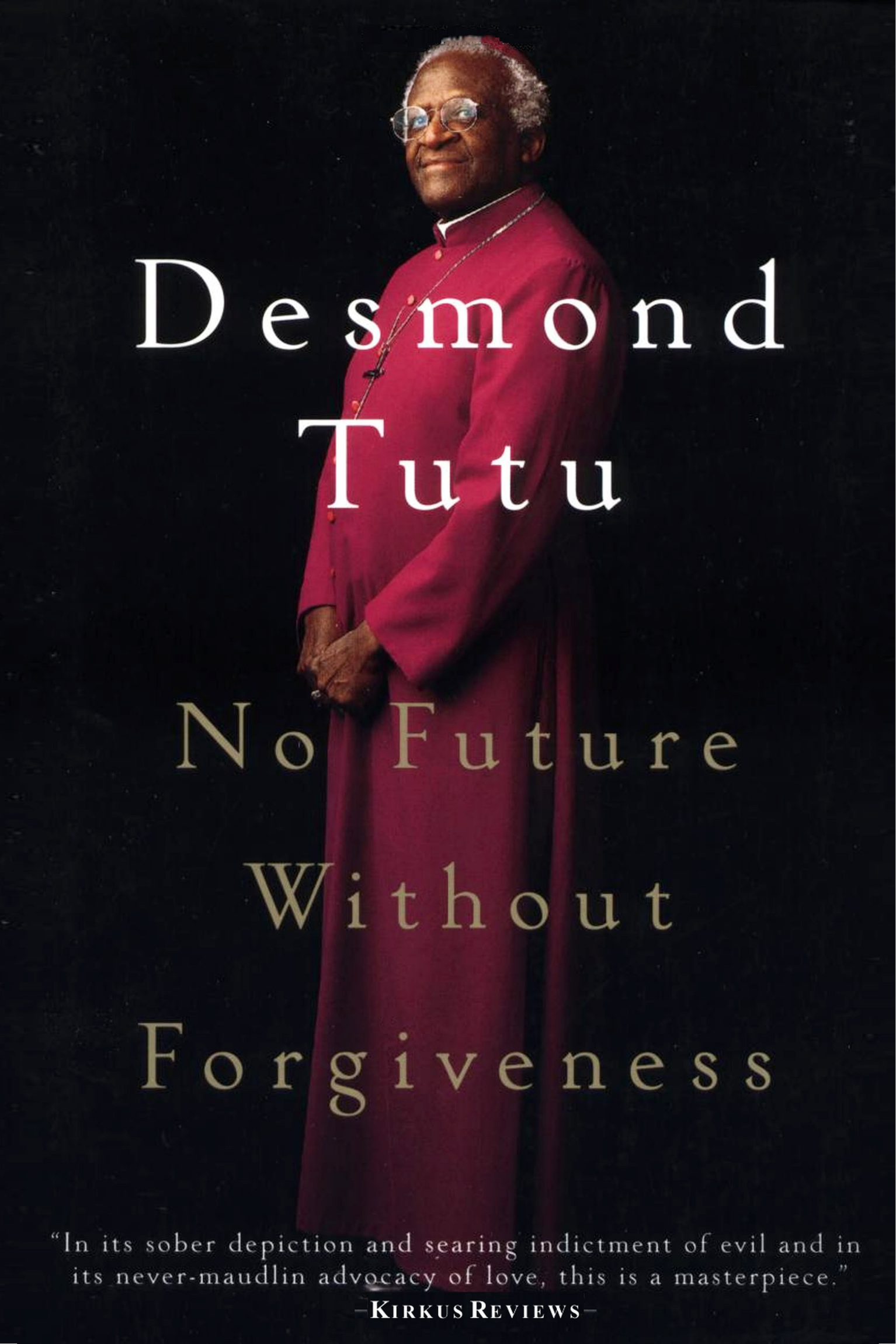


Desmond Tutu

No Future Without Forgiveness

"In its sober depiction and searing indictment of evil and in its never-maudlin advocacy of love, this is a masterpiece."

—KIRKUS REVIEWS—

NO FUTURE WITHOUT FORGIVENESS

Desmond Mpilo Tutu

Doubleday

No Future Without Forgiveness

DESMOND MPILO TUTU

AN IMAGE BOOK
PUBLISHED BY DOUBLEDAY
a division of Random House, Inc.
1540 Broadway, New York, New York 10036

Book design by Dana Leigh Treglia

Grateful acknowledgment is given to Arthur James, Ltd., for permission to reprint a selection from *Unreconciled Being* by Mary MacAleese (copyright © 1997); to HarperCollins, for permission to reprint a selection from *The Divine Milieu* by Teilhard de Chardin (copyright © 1960), and to the South African Broadcasting Corporation for a selection from their transcripts of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. "The Suffering of God" by G. A. Studdert Kennedy is reprinted from *The Sorrows of God* (copyright © 1924 by George H. Doran) by permission of Hodder & Stoughton Ltd.

The Library of Congress has cataloged the 1999 hardcover as follows:

Tutu, Desmond.
No future without forgiveness / Desmond M. Tutu.—1st ed.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references.
1. South Africa—Race relations. 2. Forgiveness—Religious aspects—Christianity. 3. Reconciliation—Religious aspects—Christianity. 4. South Africa. Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I. Title.
BR1450 .T88 1999
968.06'5—dc21 99-34451
CIP

ISBN 0-385-49690-7

Printed in the United States of America
First Image Books Edition: October 2000

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

AN IMAGE BOOK
PUBLISHED BY DOUBLEDAY
a division of Random House, Inc.
1540 Broadway, New York, New York 10036

Tutu, Desmond.

Includes bibliographical references.
1. South Africa—Race relations. 2. Forgiveness—Religious aspects—Christianity. 3. Reconciliation—Religious aspects—Christianity. 4. South Africa. Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I. Title.

BR1450.T88 1999

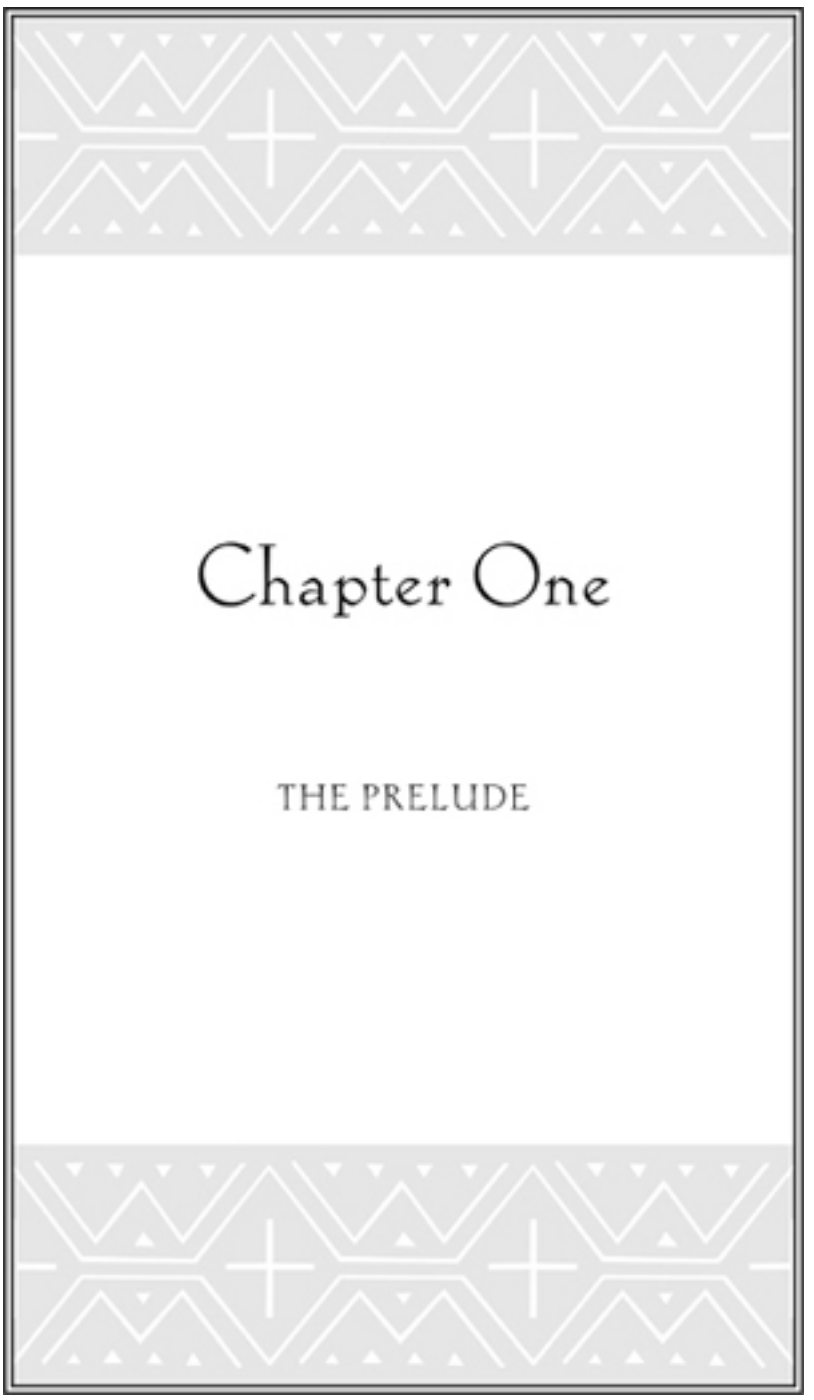
968.06′5—dc21 99-34451

CIP

eISBN: 978-0-307-56628-7

v3.0

Contents



Chapter One

THE PRELUDE

April 27, 1994—the day for which we had waited all these many long years, the day for which the struggle against

Aapartheid had been waged, for which so many of our people had been teargassed, bitten by police dogs, struck with quirts and batons, for which many more had been detained, tortured, and banned, for which others had been imprisoned, sentenced to death, for which others had gone into exile—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 27, 1994.

The air was electric with excitement, anticipation, and anxiety, with fear even. Yes, fear that those in the right wing who had promised to disrupt this day of days might in fact succeed in their nefarious schemes. After all, bombs had been going off right, left, and center. There had been bomb explosions at the International Airport in Johannesburg. Anything could happen.

As always, I had got up early for a quiet time before my morning walk and then morning prayers and the Eucharist in the Archbishop's Chapel in Bishopscourt. We wanted things to be as normalas possible on this extraordinary day in the history of our beloved but oh, so sad land whose soil was soaked with the blood of so many of her children. In the time leading up to this epoch-making event, a watershed occurrence in the history of South Africa, violence had become endemic. Until the proverbial eleventh hour Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), playing a major role, had threatened to stay out of the election. We were all bracing ourselves for the most awful bloodletting, especially in the IFP stronghold of KwaZulu/Natal, where the rivalry between the IFP and Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) was a gory affair that had already cost innumerable lives with the level of political intolerance shockingly high. It had been brinkmanship of an appalling nature. We had held our breaths and wondered what the body count would yield.

Mercifully, through the mediation of a somewhat mysterious Kenyan, Chief Buthelezi was persuaded to abandon his boycott, with its chilling prospect of a blood bath. The country breathed an enormous sigh of relief, and here we were, about to carry out what was a routine political and civic act in normal countries where the concern was usually about voter apathy and not about the risks of violence and mayhem at the polls.

We were excited and we were apprehensive. There was a tight knot of anxiety in the pit of my stomach. We prayed earnestly that God would bless our land and would confound the machinations of the children of darkness. There had been so many moments in the past, during the dark days of apartheid's vicious awfulness, when we had preached, ‘This is God's world and God is in charge!’ Sometimes, when evil seemed to be on the rampage and about to overwhelm goodness, one had held on to this article of faith by the skin of one's teeth. It was a kind of theological whistling in the dark and one 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?’

After breakfast, we drove out of Bishopscourt, the ‘official’ residence of the Archbishop of Cape Town, where Nelson Mandelahad spent his first night of freedom after his release on

February 11, 1990, and left the leafy upmarket suburb named after the Archbishop's residence to go and vote. I had decided that I would cast my vote in a ghetto township. The symbolism was powerful: the solidarity with those who for so long had been disenfranchised, living daily in the deprivation and squalor of apartheid's racially segregated ghetto townships. After all, I was one of them. When I became Archbishop in 1986 the Group Areas Act, which segregated residential areas racially, was still in force. It was a criminal offence for me, a Nobel laureate without a vote and now Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Anglican Church in southern Africa, to occupy Bishopscourt with my family unless I had first obtained a special permit exempting me from the provisions of the Group Areas Act. I had, however, announced after my election as Archbishop that I would not be applying for such a permit. I said I was Archbishop, would be occupying the Archbishop's official residence, and that the apartheid government could act as it saw fit. No charges were ever preferred against me for contravening this obnoxious law.

I went to vote in Gugulethu, a black township with its typical matchbox-type houses in row after monotonous row. There was a long queue already waiting. People were in good spirits; they were going to need dollops of patience and good humor because they were in for a long wait. My first democratic vote was a media event, and many of our friends from overseas were present, acting as monitors to be able to certify whether the elections were fair and free. But they were doing a great deal more than that. They were really like midwives helping to bring to birth this new delicate infant—free, democratic, nonracial, nonsexist South Africa.

The moment for which I had waited so long came and I folded my ballot paper and cast my vote. Wow! I shouted, ‘Yippee!’ It was giddy stuff. It was like falling in love. The sky looked blue and more beautiful. I saw the people in a new light. They were beautiful, they were transfigured. I too was transfigured. It was dreamlike. You were scared someone would rouse you and you would awake to the night-mare that was apartheid's harsh reality. Someone referring to that dreamlike quality had said to his wife, ‘Darling, don't wake me. I like this dream.’

After voting, I went outside and the people cheered and sang and danced. It was like a festival. It was a wonderful vindication for all of those who had borne the burden and the heat of repression, the little people whom apartheid had turned into the anonymous ones, faceless, voiceless, counting for nothing in their motherland, whose noses had been rubbed

daily in the dust. They had been created in the image of God but their dignity had been callously trodden underfoot daily by apartheid's minions and those who might have said they were opposed to apartheid but had nonetheless gone on enjoying the privileges and huge benefits that apartheid provided them—just because of an accident of birth, a biological irrelevance, the color of their skin.

I decided to drive around a bit to see what was happening. I was appalled by what I saw. The people had come out in droves, standing in those long lines which have now become world famous. They were so vulnerable. The police and the security forces were probably stretched but they were hardly a conspicuous presence. It would have taken just a few crazy extremists with AK-47s to sow the most awful mayhem and havoc. It did not happen. And virtually everywhere there was a hitch of one sort or the other. Here it was insufficient ballot papers, there it was not enough ink pads, elsewhere the officials had not yet turned up hours after the polls were due to have opened. The people were quite amazing in their patience. It was a comprehensive disaster waiting to happen. And it did not happen.

It was an amazing spectacle. People of all races were standing together in the same queues, perhaps for the very first time in their lives. Professionals, domestic workers, cleaners and their madams— all were standing in those lines that were snaking their way slowly to the polling booth. What should have been a disaster turned out to bea blessing in disguise. Those lines produced a new and peculiarly South African status symbol. Afterward people boasted, ‘I stood for two hours to vote.’ ‘I waited for four hours!’

Those long hours helped us South Africans to find one another. People shared newspapers, sandwiches, umbrellas, and the scales began to fall from their eyes. South Africans found fellow South Africans—they realized what we had been at such pains to tell them, that they shared a common humanity, that race, ethnicity, skin color were really irrelevancies. They discovered not a Colored, a black, an Indian, a white. No, they found fellow human beings. What a profound scientific discovery that blacks, Coloreds (usually people of mixed race), and Indians were in fact human beings, who had the same concerns and anxieties and aspirations. They wanted a decent home, a good job, a safe environment for their families, good schools for their children, and almost none wanted to drive the whites into the sea. They just wanted their place in the sun.

Everywhere else elections are secular political events. Ours was more than this, much, much more. It was a veritable spiritual experience. It was a mountaintop experience. The black