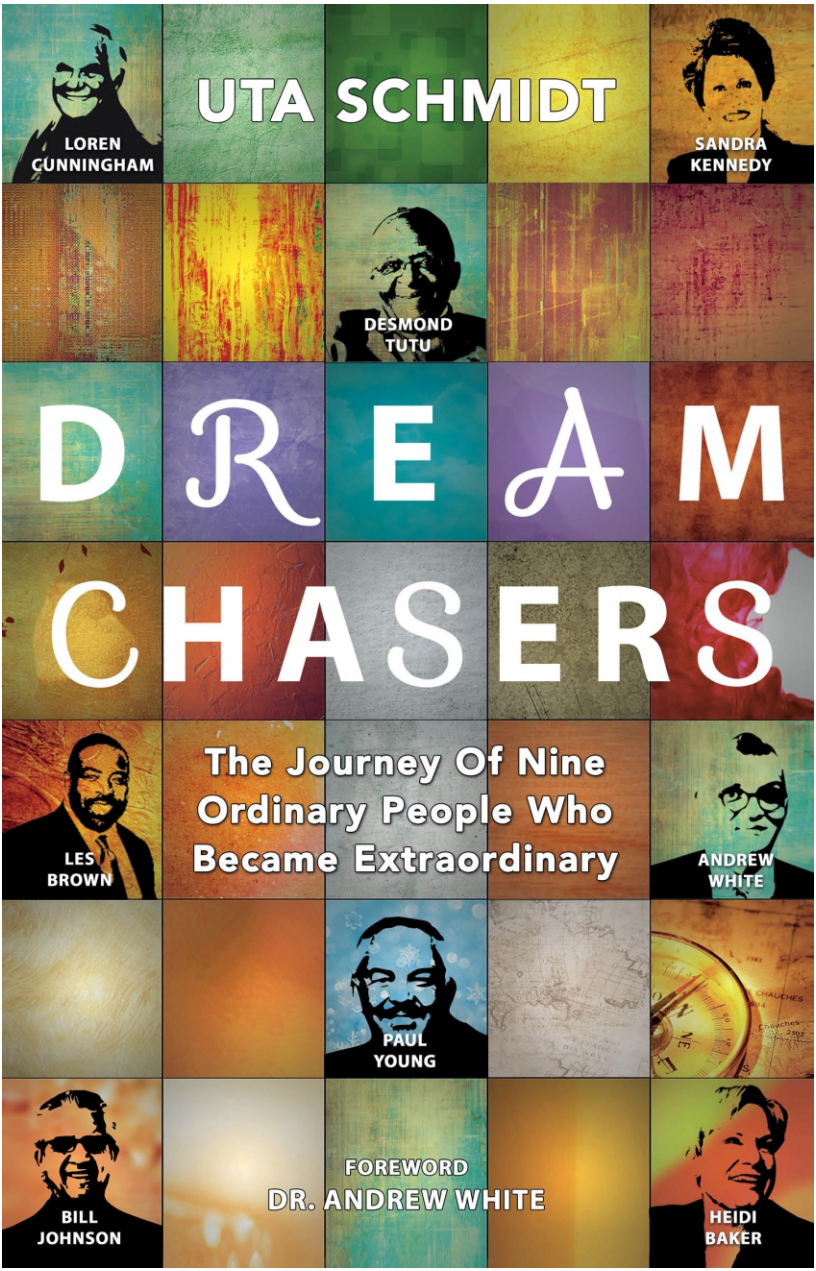
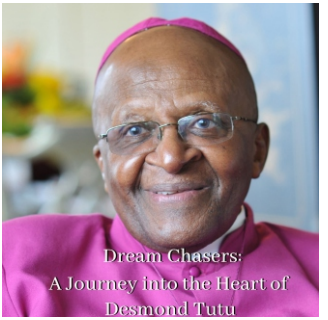

UTA SCHMIDT
LOREN GUNNINGHAM
SANDRA KENNEDY
DESMOND TUTU
DREAM
CHASERS
The Journey Of Nine Ordinary People Who Became Extraordinary
LES BROWN
ANDREW WHITE
PAUL YOUNG
BILL JOHNSON
FOREWORD
DR. ANDREW WHITE
HEIDI BAKER

Dream Chasers *is a great project that gets to the heart of the challenge of the Christian life: navigating through seasons of pain and contradiction by trusting God, who is always good. You can't help but be inspired as you read the stories of the trials and victories of some of my personal heroes. I'm sure you will find hope and courage to follow through on your own journey as you pursue your destiny and fulfil your God-given dreams.*

Bill Johnson, senior pastor at Bethel Church, and author of *When Heaven Invades Earth* and *God Is Good*

DREAM CHASERS

The Journey of Nine Ordinary People Who Became Extraordinary



Uta Schmidt

dca Dream Chasers Approach

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Choosing forgiveness and reconciliation

Desmond Tutu

God, I know you are in charge; I just wish you would make it slightly more obvious!

Desmond Tutu, Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town

They had been driving for hours in the scorching heat along the vast endless plains of the Karoo desert, and the children had started nagging and bickering in the back seat of their station wagon.

"This heat is killing me," Desmond mumbled, and then jerked his head toward his children. "Stop fighting! For goodness' sake, this is driving me crazy!" He was on edge, and so was everyone else.

The youngest two, Naomi and Mpho, started crying. "We're so hot! Can't we stop? This always takes so long!"

They hadn't even managed half of the sixteen-hour trip from the Eastern Cape up to Krugersdorp near Johannesburg, where they would spend the night with Desmond's parents. The next day, they would complete the last five-hour stretch to Swaziland.

"We'll take a break soon," Desmond's wife Leah tried to calm the children. But, in reality, they would have to press on. There were no hotels or inns on the way that would accommodate blacks at any price.

Foreword

by Canon Andrew White
Vicar Emeritus of Baghdad

I am often asked to write forewords for books. I often read books which really would have been of great use in my former profession of putting people to sleep (I was an anaesthetist)… But this book is different! It is different because it is about people who do not take care, but rather take risks for the kingdom of God!

This book looks at some of the giants of the faith. It is the intimate story of those who have realized in life that the problem to walking in our destiny is not stumbling or falling; rather, the problem is not getting up. It includes the stories of Desmond Tutu (Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town), William Paul Young (author of *The Shack*), Les Brown (inspirational speaker), Bill Johnson (pastor of Bethel Church, Redding), Loren Cunningham (founder of Youth With A Mission), Rolland and Heidi Baker (Iris Ministries, Mozambique) and Dr Sandra Kennedy (Whole Life Ministries).

All of these people have experienced setbacks and have fallen in their journey of life, but they have also gotten up again. And because these people did, they have made a difference not just in their own community, but also across the world. This is a book we must all read, learn from, and absorb.

Dream Chasers is a book that indeed allows and encourages the reader to get up and pursue the fullness of their calling and destiny. It challenges the reader to not be complacent, but to see what's possible and to join in the battle to truly establish God's kingdom in its majesty and glory. This is a book about getting up when life knocks you down. It is about taking risks

"Apartheid was active at full force,"[1] Tutu writes in *The Book of Forgiving*. "And that was the reason for their trip.

Several years before, in 1953, the apartheid government of South Africa had instituted the Bantu Education Act, which introduced a racially segregated education system. Enforcing an inferior education for blacks, it essentially relegated them to manual labour. Desmond and Leah had both left the teaching profession in protest, and they had vowed never to subject their children to this arrangement. The only way to bypass Bantu education was to send their children to boarding school in the neighbouring country of Swaziland.

Mirage vs oasis

The trip was always a drag. Aside from fatigue and the unbearable heat, the anticipation of their impending separation for the next boarding-school term added another level of peevishness to the atmosphere in the car. Trevor and Theresa, the two eldest seated by the doors, rolled down the windows in the hope of catching a breeze, but the desert wind was like the scorching air that rushes out when opening an oven.

They were just reaching a remote desert town when Desmond's eyes lit up at the sight of an oasis in the endless desert drive: a sign on the side of the road that read "Wall's Ice Cream". That was exactly what they needed! He pointed out the sign, and immediately the mood in the car lifted. Desmond could almost feel the cold creaminess refreshing his scorched throat as they pulled into the driveway. He stumbled out of the car and walked up to the door.

Desmond had hardly entered the store when the boy standing behind the register stabbed his hand in the air, pointing to the window and yelling, "*Kaffir!* Read the sign!"[2]

Desmond looked at the window and, as he recounts in his book, he read, "No black man's feet allowed on the hallowed

ground of this store"[3] – except probably for scrubbing the toilets and floors.

That was it! The pain of the impending separation from the children, their whining, the heat, the fatigue – and now this! Anger flared up inside him, and he rushed out and told everyone, "Get back in the car!" The children were confused but could sense the trouble brewing in the air. No one said a word.

"I was furious," Desmond writes. "And like so many frustrated parents, my temper flared. Underneath my temper, however, was a bright, burning wound."[4]

Second-class citizens

Even though this had been a less significant instance of discrimination, with no physical injuries, the hurt was very deep.

"It was a stinging hurt that was heaped on all the other hurts that were commonplace in our daily lives under apartheid. We were so used to these incidents that, at the time, I didn't consciously realize I had to forgive the boy behind the register,"[5] Desmond relates in his book.

Desmond Tutu's life is a story of numerous personal assaults, obstacles, and hardships, all stemming from the time of his struggle against the apartheid regime. In a similar way to Nelson Mandela, he also had to take a long walk to freedom. One of the world's most famous priests, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 for his relentless efforts to speak up for the oppressed and to fight injustice. As a black man in South Africa, the injustices he himself suffered were manifold. He was beaten, handcuffed, ridiculed, and received many death threats, but these assaults were not the worst apartheid had to offer.

"Growing up under the apartheid regime had such a tremendous effect on how you saw yourself as a human being," Tutu disclosed in our interview. "You always felt you were a second-class citizen, that you were not quite as 'human' as the

others – the whites. The apartheid ideology affected our way of thinking and we were often deeply humiliated by all the segregation laws."

He continued, "We had separate entrances for blacks and whites to go into the bank or the post office, and we had separate exits – but then we all used the same street. It was ridiculous!"

The unforgivable offence

Tutu shared one such experience that occurred after the Tutu family had just returned to South Africa from England. For four years, while Desmond completed his Masters in Theology at King's College in London, they lived in England, and their youngest daughter Mpho was born there. Tutu was then called back to South Africa to be the Anglican Dean of St Mary's Cathedral in Johannesburg.

One Sunday afternoon back in South Africa, the Tutus were outside with their children when little Mpho saw some white children playing on swings at a playground. "I want to go there and play too," she said.

But Desmond had to tell her, "No, sweetheart, you can't."

Mpho didn't understand. "But why?" she demanded "There are other children playing over there!"

"That was so difficult," Desmond related in our conversation. "I just wanted the ground to open and swallow me up. How did I tell my child, 'Yes, you are a child, but you are not a child like these other children on the swings and roundabouts'?" He continued, "Instances like these were the most difficult. How apartheid affects you as a grown-up is one thing, but, as a parent, how it affects your child is a totally different thing, and there was nothing you could do about it! That was the worst aspect of apartheid, because it made you feel so helpless."

Tutu willingly tolerated intimidation, death threats, and discrimination. But it really gutted him when it involved his

family. In an interview with Norwegian journalist Fredrik Skavlan, he shared: "One thing I found almost unforgivable was when the people who tried to threaten me would call our house, and one of my children would pick up the phone. I should think they would say, 'Go get your father or mother.' But instead they would say to my children, 'Tell your father we are going to kill him!' I could see the anxious look on their face after they hung up the phone, and it made me really angry. I chose this work to fight against apartheid; my children didn't."

Another time, Tutu's wife Leah was handcuffed and paraded through the streets of Johannesburg for a minor traffic offence. "And that really made me furious; it took long to forgive that type of offence."[6]

No future without forgiveness

In an interview with broadcast journalist David Frost, Tutu disclosed that in the early stages of the struggle against apartheid, he experienced anger toward God. "I would often say, 'God, I know you are in charge; I just wish you would make it slightly more obvious!' I didn't doubt God, I never have, but when things in our nation didn't improve, I sometimes got really angry at him. I would rail at him and say, 'For goodness' sake! Why don't you do something about this!'"[7]

With time, though, he learned that there is only one way forward, and that is the path of forgiveness.

"What I learned throughout my life is that there is no future without forgiveness," Tutu reiterated in our conversation. "I often would repeat the saying, 'There go I but for the grace of God.' I was constantly reminding myself that if I had been exposed to the same pressures, circumstances, and conditions as the particular person who humiliated me or insulted my pride, could I be sure that I would not have done the same and

turned out the same way? No, I couldn't. I hope I would not have, but I couldn't be sure that I would not have turned out to be an oppressor."

Tutu's core message to the nation of South Africa and to the world has been that there is no future without forgiveness. He served in a vital role as the chair of the nation's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), facilitating the process of forgiveness and reconciliation in the aftermath of the abolition of apartheid.

But before going deeper into Tutu's insights on the process of how forgiveness is possible, even for the most ghastly atrocities, let's first have a look at his early life, how his main message developed, and how he became one of the world's most famous priests.

Escaping death

Tutu's career was not a stellar one, planned out or pursued in detail. On the contrary, it was all rather accidental. Desmond Tutu never aspired to become a priest, although one of his main mentors and role models in his early life was a priest. Tutu says about his own life that God "forced" him into his destiny.[8] This becomes clearer when you compare what he had originally planned for his life with what he ultimately became.

Desmond Tutu was born in 1931 in Klerksdorp, an impoverished township on the outskirts of Johannesburg. He was a frail and sickly baby, and his parents feared he would not survive and would end up like his older brother, who had died before Desmond was born. To everyone's surprise he did survive, and his grandmother then gave him the middle name Mpilo, which means "life". Desmond was a very cheerful child and was loved for his great sense of humour. He was a peace lover and as such had a mild and non-confrontational temperament.[9] This would prove to be one of the greatest

challenges for him to overcome later when he had to take on the leadership role in the nation's struggle against the white apartheid regime.

"My greatest weakness was being scared!" Tutu professed in our conversation. The whites hated him because he was speaking up for the oppressed, but the blacks opposed him, too, because he preached non-violent resistance. Caught up in the heat of the conflict, he received criticism and attack from both sides.

From his early childhood, Desmond carried within him a strong sense of justice. This may have stemmed from his experience of his father's repeated drunken and violent outbursts at home. When his father was drunk, he would beat Desmond's mother. As a boy, Desmond felt a strong resentment toward him.

"I wanted to protect my mother and beat him up, but I was too small," Desmond recalled. "My father was a great man in many respects, but when he got drunk, he was awful. I wanted to hurt him like he had hurt my mother. As a boy, I was very angry with him, and it wounded my soul. Even after I had worked through a long process of forgiveness, I still carried some residue of anger and pain when I thought back to those times."

Desmond's mother was the most important person in his life, and one of the people who shaped him the most.

"I resemble my mother physically. I got my big nose from her, which I have to put into everything," Tutu chuckled. "She was short and stumpy and had a big nose like I do, and I have often prayed that I might not only resemble her physically, but also in her love and compassion for others. Although she was not educated, she was an incredible human being, and she had a huge influence on my life."

Small token with lasting impact

Tutu vividly remembers an incident with his mother that made a deep and lasting impression on him.

"I was about nine years old, and my mother was working at a school for the blind as a domestic worker. She took me along one day, and I saw a white priest approaching. When he passed by, he tipped his hat and said, 'Madam,' greeting my mother. I was stunned. I had never seen a white person greet my mother in respect, let alone call her *madam*!"

Just a few years later, at the age of fourteen, Desmond was diagnosed with tuberculosis (TB). He had always been thin and frail, but this was the most serious illness of his life, and when he started coughing up blood, the doctors feared he would not survive. He ended up spending long months in sterile hospital surroundings, which he found extremely difficult. He experienced intense feelings of isolation, loneliness, and despair during his twenty-month treatment away from home.[10]

During this time, the same priest he had encountered years before made a major impact on Desmond, which would stay with him for the rest of his life. In our conversation he remembered, "I was hospitalized for nearly two years, and this priest visited me every week. If he couldn't, then he sent a member of his community to visit me. Even though I didn't know at the time that I was learning, I learned from him how you can make someone feel important. There was this important white person visiting me – a black child, a 'non-entity' in South Africa – every week and paying so much attention to me! This did something incredible for my self-esteem."

The priest, named Trevor Huddleston, demonstrated love in action, and he also taught Desmond another very important lesson: that not all white people were the same. Trevor Huddleston would become Desmond's mentor, and later an important anti-apartheid figure in Britain.

During Desmond's long hospitalization, Huddleston provided him with many books, which he eagerly devoured in order to pass his school exams. During that time, Desmond developed a great love for literature and became an avid reader. During Huddleston's many visits to Desmond's room, he also discussed South Africa's problems with him openly.

As a result of the inspiring example of Father Huddleston, Desmond's faith deepened greatly during his time in hospital.[11] He also thrived academically. The TB rendered his right hand partially paralyzed, so he taught himself to write left-handed. Despite his long absence from school, he passed the Joint Matriculation Board Exams in 1950 and was among the 0.5 per cent of black Africans who qualified for university entrance.

Detour or destiny?

Desmond's father hoped he would follow in his footsteps and go into teaching, but Desmond's dream was to become a medical doctor. He had developed a love for medicine while in hospital, and he had a specific interest in researching TB, which had so devastated his own health. In addition, Desmond aspired to become one of the few black Africans to achieve high academic and professional goals. There was only one Western-trained black African doctor in the nation, who practiced medicine in Sophiatown, and Tutu was inspired by his example.

Desmond was admitted to medical school at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, but, to his great dismay, he was unable to raise the tuition fees for this elite institution. Eventually, he was forced to make other plans. Career options for blacks were limited, and the most obvious choice was to become a teacher, so that was what he did. Unfortunately, that only lasted until his resignation in protest of the Bantu Education Act. The only remaining viable option for black South Africans with academic aspirations was to pursue a career in the church.

At the age of twenty-nine, Desmond started all over again and began his training to become an Anglican priest at St Peter's Theological College in Johannesburg in 1958. Even though the priesthood was not what he had in mind initially, it was there that he found his real passion and call in life. Of course, he had no idea of the path that would open up before him: to become possibly the world's most famous priest and God's megaphone in the struggle for human rights and justice in South Africa.

Passion for compassion

By the time Tutu started retraining in the church, he and Leah were married and their first two children, Trevor and Theresa, had been born. Leah had also left the teaching profession and retrained as a nurse. Starting over demanded a lot of sacrifices from them both. But they stayed true to themselves and did not shy away from discomfort or inconvenience in order to stand up for what they believed.

The problems of apartheid not only permeated the school system, but also seeped through the infrastructure of the church. Black African ministers faced lower pay and fewer options for advancement in the white-controlled church. For example, the scholarship that Tutu received for training as a priest was lower than the standard amount designated for whites. White curates were provided with housing, but when Desmond was ordained as a curate, he and Leah, together with their three children, had to live in a garage on the outskirts of the township of their assigned parish. That garage was their main bedroom, the children's bedroom, their lounge, and dining room all rolled into one.[12]

Despite the difficult conditions, Tutu undertook his duties as clergyman very diligently. He visited his parishioners regularly in their even poorer township homes and listened to

their concerns, their pains, and their questions. In ministering to the overwhelmingly poor members of his congregation, Tutu developed a deep compassion and an intense passion for the priesthood. Soon after he was ordained as a priest in 1961, new doors opened for him to increase his qualifications in England by studying for a Master's degree in theology.

Dignity restored

Tutu's time in Britain was not only an important stepping stone that eventually led him on to an international platform in the fight for justice in South Africa. It was also a time of personal reshaping and internal preparation for this future task. Desmond and Leah were astounded by their newfound freedom in Britain. It had a deep impact on him, developing his confidence and helping him shed the deeply ingrained sense of racial inferiority. Both of them enjoyed the liberty they experienced in Britain. Desmond especially made a game of hearing people address him with respect.

"When we saw a policeman we would stop him and ask him for directions, even if we knew where we were going!" Tutu told us. "We did it for the mere pleasure of being called *sir* or *madam* – something that was just unthinkable in South Africa! There we would have been asked for our passes and ran the risk of being arrested."

This liberating experience helped him to become, as he has described it, "more fully human", and slowly freed him from his sense of inferiority as a black man.[13]

During Tutu's time in Britain between 1962 and 1966, he led a parish that included white parishioners. Again, this new experience helped him overcome the habit of automatically deferring to whites. He developed the confidence to disagree openly with whites, and he felt freer to express his opinions than he had ever been able to in South Africa.

"It was very liberating not to experience daily discrimination, and it was there that I actually realized how deeply apartheid had affected me," Tutu remembered.

In another interview, he related, "You know the worst thing about apartheid was how it made you feel about yourself, the way it made you doubt that you were actually really a child of God. When you are constantly subjected to discrimination, it begins to work on your mind. You start thinking, 'Maybe they are right. Maybe I am just a second-class human being. Maybe I am of lesser value.'"[14]

Tutu went on to describe how he discovered the power of language and what it can do to a person. "Language does not just describe reality. Language *creates* the reality it describes. So when you are called a *non-European*, a *non-this* or a *non-that*, you might think it does not affect you, but it is in fact very corrosive to your self-image. You end up wondering whether you are actually as human as these others."[15]

Desmond's experience in Britain helped him to overcome the effects the apartheid labelling had had on his feelings about himself. Then, when back in South Africa, he recognized more and more how this sense of inferiority among black South Africans actually dehumanized them and caused them to treat each other poorly. He also began to believe that an important part in healing the nation would be the restoration of a sense of personal dignity.

Looking the beast in the eye

But even in Tutu's own life, the apartheid ideology had a lasting impact on his thinking, catching him by surprise when it surfaced. In our conversation, he described one such instance: "One time I boarded a plane in Nigeria and then saw that both the pilot and co-pilot were black. And you know what happened? A sudden feeling of unease crept into my consciousness. I was

wondering whether these two black pilots were actually capable of flying this plane!" After take-off, the flight got a bit bumpy. "I was holding on to my seat, sweating and wondering whether we'd make it!" Tutu laughed as he painted the picture for us. Of course, he arrived at his destination safely. "It was instances like these, but in particular during the hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, that we had to realize we were deeply wounded people."

How do you heal a people that have been crushed under the oppression of such a dehumanizing system as apartheid? How South Africa functioned in the years after apartheid was abolished is still considered a miracle, because everyone had expected the nation to erupt into a bloodbath of retaliation. But, for South Africa's new leaders, the recent events in Rwanda had been a daunting warning sign. They knew that they had to deal with their past in a different way if they wanted to avoid a similar situation.

"You have to look the beast in the eye," Tutu insisted in a speech on truth and reconciliation. "Forgetting the past is not an option! That's what we learned from Rwanda. It reminds me of the haunting inscription at the entrance of the Dachau concentration camp museum: 'Those who forget the past are doomed to repeat it.' The past dealt with by silencing it does not remain the past. It refuses to lie down quietly," he continued. "Bygones don't become bygones just by your say-so. You cannot just say, 'Be gone!' Bygones will return to haunt you – and we had just witnessed this in Rwanda: the Tutsis had done something to the Hutus a long time ago, and it seemed to be gone. But after thirty years the ghost from the past returned and the Hutus struck back with relentless rage and revenge."[16]

The importance of truth

Tutu explains that when you try to silence the past, you actually

re-victimize the victim. "When you say, 'Let's forget about it,' you are in essence saying to the victims that what happened in their case either didn't happen or that it doesn't matter. And that is very detrimental. So we had to ask ourselves how we were going to deal with our past, and we chose a compromise: we offered amnesty to the perpetrators in exchange for truth."[17]

When Nelson Mandela became President of South Africa in 1994 and asked Desmond Tutu to chair the nation's Truth and Reconciliation Commission to deal with the atrocities that had been committed under apartheid, Tutu knew that the task ahead was daunting. In fact, the decision was met with scepticism at first, and the leaders were accused of letting people get away with murder. But as the process continued, many came to see the wisdom in it.

Tutu recounts, "Sometimes victims were heard for the first time when they shared their story of personal suffering, and we have found that just in *telling the story*, people experienced a catharsis, a healing." Tutu compared the TRC's task with that of opening a wound and cleansing it, so that in the end the country could be healed.

In total, the TRC listened to more than 20,000 individual testimonies about the ghastly acts that had been committed during apartheid. And Tutu insisted on hearing the stories of the "little people", not just the big stories that had already been told. He wanted to hear from the people in little towns in faraway places, whose suffering had been ignored for so long.

During the very first hearing of the TRC, Tutu broke down crying. "It was terrible, because I cry easily," he says. He immediately recognized that he couldn't allow that to happen again, because: "The media then concentrated on me, instead of the people who were the rightful subjects of attention. After that first hearing I was determined that if I was going to cry, I would cry at home or at church – and that's what I did." [18] During subsequent hearings, Tutu would often bite his own

hand when he began to feel emotional, in order not to divert the focus from the victims.

Many of the victims' testimonies heard by the TRC were absolutely horrendous and heartbreaking.

"We are talking about rape, torture, and genocide. We thought there was no end to the cruelty and ghastly atrocities people can come up with and were willing to do to other people," Tutu reported in the online documentary 'Apartheid, Perpetrators, Forgiveness'.[19]

What sustained Tutu during this time – and, in fact, throughout his whole life – was prayer. He says, "There are so many noises around us, and I personally need to seek the quiet to hear God and commune with him. I was trained as a priest in a convent, and I stuck to the regimen of early devotion. So that is something I have practiced ever since I became a priest, and it has sustained me throughout all the years."

He continues, "And then there are the prayers of so many others, which have sustained me. Without the prayers that so many have offered for me, I could not have made it."

Becoming wounded healers

Even though the TRC was a political council and not a religious one, Tutu led them in prayer before each hearing, asking the Holy Spirit to bring comfort and healing to the nation. Besides revealing and acknowledging the horrible suffering of the victims, the Commission also provided the perpetrators with opportunities to make amends.

Tutu recounted in one television interview: "Most of them were actually quite genuine when they asked for forgiveness from the victims. They were not required to do that, yet many of them did. And it was an incredible privilege to have been part of the whole process, to be wounded healers. We realized this more and more during this period of the hearings of the

TRC, that we are a wounded people, and that we are wounded healers."[20]

Contrary to what many expected, what is most remembered and valued from the TRC process is not the revelation of the ghastly acts and atrocities that were committed, but rather the incredible generosity and magnanimity of the many victims who forgave. One nineteen-year-old girl named Babalwa spoke about the grief and hardship her family experienced after her father was killed by the apartheid regime. Only eight at the time, she was left to raise her three-year-old brother.

"I would love to know who killed my father. So would my brother," Babalwa said when she shared her heartbreaking story before the TRC. But what she said next astonished everyone. "We want to know, because we want to forgive – but we don't know *who* to forgive."[21]

Understanding forgiveness

How is such forgiveness possible? The TRC heard many extraordinary stories of forgiveness, but Tutu insisted (in a different interview) that we all have the capacity to be extraordinary. "We might think we wouldn't be able to do that when we hear these testimonies. But you don't know. You don't know how you really would react. The *capacity to forgive* is in each one of us, but it is something you actually do for yourself. By forgiving you serve your peace of mind and spirit. Forgiveness serves your own well-being. When you are wronged, humiliated, or hurt, your blood pressure goes up and you feel it in your tum-tum. But when you forgive, your blood pressure goes down, and you are able to release anger and hatred. So forgiveness is good for your physical and your spiritual well-being. It is what you do for your own sake."[22]

In the previously mentioned documentary on forgiveness, Tutu explained that you find freedom for yourself in the act

of forgiving. "The person who has done the evil deed will face consequences, but until you are willing to forgive them, you are still tied to them. You continue to be punished by what they have done."

Tutu goes on to explain how to break the vicious cycle of unforgiveness. "By the fact that someone has wronged, hurt, or abused us, we have a certain right over that person in that we could refuse to forgive. We could keep the right to retribution. But when I forgive, I jettison that right and I open the door of opportunity for the other person to make a new beginning. That is what I do when I forgive."[23]

The victims in South Africa experienced acts of cruelty and torture. Is it possible that these can be forgiven, and can real reconciliation actually occur between the victim and this kind of perpetrator?

Tutu shares his answer: "Well, as a Christian, I have to ask: is there anything that is unforgivable? I'm afraid we are following a Lord and Master who, at the point where he was tortured and crucified in the most painful way, prayed for those who tortured him, and he even found an excuse for them: 'They do not know what they are doing.' And we follow one who says, 'Forgive one another as God in Christ forgave you.' That is for us the paradigm. We might not always reach that ideal, but that is the standard."[24]

The path of forgiveness is not an easy one, and, depending on the severity of the harm caused, it can be a long walk to find the freedom that is released in forgiveness. Tutu does not make light of the cost of this process. "On this path we must walk through the muddy shoals of hatred and anger and make our way through grief and loss to find the acceptance that is the hallmark of forgiveness."[25] It would be easier if there were clear steps to follow, and if the path of forgiveness was clearly marked out, but it is not. For some, granting forgiveness may happen quickly, maybe even within seconds. For others, it may take months or even years, depending on the severity of the harm.

Granting forgiveness can also be more difficult when the perpetrator does not show any remorse. "Of course, it is preferable if the perpetrator asks for forgiveness," Tutu states. But in the end, the path of forgiveness is the only path worth following, and the only way forward into healing.

Forgiveness is not easy

Some people, even some in Christian communities, have unknowingly adopted a Buddhist concept of forgiveness, believing that forgiveness entails letting go of the sorrow and dying to the past. But Desmond Tutu corrects this misconception in the documentary. "I doubt that you are able by an act of will to let go of the pain. The *will* part of forgiveness is where you say, 'I am not going to let you victimize me and hold me in a position where I harbour resentment against you, and where I am looking for an opportunity to pay you back. I am letting go of that right.'"[26] In other words, forgiving does not mean forgetting the harm. Neither does it mean pretending that the injury was not as bad as it really was. "Quite the opposite is true," Tutu states in his book. "The cycle of forgiveness can be activated and completed only with absolute truth and honesty."[27]

That's why the TRC only granted amnesty to the perpetrators in exchange for the *truth*. It's also the reason why they made a point of listening to the thousands of individual victims' testimonies of personal suffering. "What we found is that people seemed to find a great deal of healing just in being able to tell their story. I suppose in some way it was authenticating them," Tutu says. "And by listening to their story, it was as if we were saying 'We acknowledge that you are you, and that you are someone of infinite worth and value.'"[28]

The most important lesson that Tutu takes away from the TRC process is that no situation is completely beyond redemption. He describes it in the forgiveness documentary:

"We all learned that there is no situation of which we can say, 'This is absolutely, totally devoid of hope,' because that is what people thought about South Africa."[29]

He also reveals his belief that the real heroes of the Commission's work were those who might be called "ordinary people": "There are no ordinary people in my theology, but it is the small people, the ones who used to be non-entities, that are the stars. It's been an incredible privilege to listen to people who rightfully should have been consumed by anger, bitterness, and revenge. When you experience their magnanimity, their willingness to forgive, it actually shows how incredibly good and generous these people are. It is not just fiction when we say we are made in the image of God – we are made for goodness. That is so incredible!"[30]

Prisoner of hope

Desmond Tutu believes that this capacity for good exists at the heart of every individual. For this he is often called an optimist. But he refutes that: "I'm not an optimist; I'm simply a prisoner of hope. When we understand God's dream and calling on our lives, we can only be amazed! We are created in the image of God! Even the person who has done the evil deed is created in the image of God. We are, in fact, God-carriers!" However, he acknowledges, "We don't really believe this. We dismiss people who don't fit into our mould – the criminal, the beggar on the street."

Tutu is passionate in his belief that all humans are God-carriers. "If we had the right kind of eyes we would see God there! God doesn't just say 'I love you' when you are likable. He says 'I love you' even when people see you at your worst!"[31]

Tutu illustrates this idea in another interview, using the Bible story of the good shepherd. "Most churches show us a picture of a shepherd with a lamb. But lambs don't stray; it's the grown-up sheep that stray. The sheep that strayed was

a troublesome old ram – and that's what the shepherd went after, leaving the good sheep behind! God turns our kinds of values upside down, because I would generally invest in someone who is good. But God says, 'I will invest in one they say is bad,' because he knows their true identity and what they are made of! He knows their potential, their calling to be God-carriers, and he calls them back."[32]

Dream dreams

Because Desmond sees this potential for goodness in people, his greatest advice is to dream dreams.

"Don't be infected by the cynicism in this world. God wants to use you. Believe that this world can become a better place, a world where there is room for everyone, a world where you have the capacity to include all and not be shaken and scared by the successes of others!"

He continues, "Dream of a world where poverty is history, where everyone knows they have a place in God's heart. Young people dream dreams, but then they grow up and forget them. Don't forget your dreams! Dream!"

Desmond Tutu is a truly humble person and a carrier of hope. His joy is contagious and, at the age of eighty-five, his wit and sense of humour have not diminished. When I asked him in our interview if he would do anything differently if he could live his life again, he said impishly, "Become an adult!" and laughed heartily. But the reality is that he is an icon who has learned to keep his childlikeness while taking on immense responsibility. Despite all the challenges, struggles, and obstacles he has faced, he celebrates life. Although some of Tutu's liberal views have not been without controversy, his theology of forgiveness and transformation leaves a legacy of hope.

Tutu also focuses on the individual and truly knows how to make someone feel important. His character, compassion,

integrity, and authenticity have made him an example for his people. And his message that there is no future without forgiveness motivated a whole nation to engage in a process of forgiveness and reconciliation.

But what is at the root of his convictions? His own experience of forgiveness. He himself was wounded – in childhood by an alcoholic parent, during his teenage years in his battle with TB, by the unrealized dream of becoming a doctor. That was in addition to the racial oppression, personal assaults, and death threats he experienced under apartheid. But a personal journey through the process of forgiveness has transformed him.

We learn from Tutu that no situation is totally devoid of hope. Whatever challenge, pain, loss, betrayal, grief, or obstacle you have experienced, if you walk on the path of forgiveness and reconciliation, your situation can be transformed. What was lost can be restored and redeemed in ways you cannot imagine when you take the journey to heal the wounds of the past, and you yourself become a wounded healer.

Chapter Ten
Greatness in the Making

Understanding the process of transformation

Dear child of God,
I'm sorry to say that suffering is not optional.
Suffering is part and parcel of the human condition,
but suffering can either embitter or ennoble us.
It can ennoble us and become a spirituality of
transformation when we find meaning in it
Desmond Tutu

When Nelson Mandela became President of South Africa in 1994, one of the first people he invited to the statehouse was the man who had been the prosecutor in his trial for treason twenty-seven years earlier – the man who had sent him to Robben Island and had actually argued for his death sentence! Later, he invited the widows of former political leaders who had persecuted him to dine with him. And he even undertook a long journey to visit the widow of former apartheid legislator Dr Hendrik Verwoerd – the man who had engineered and implemented the racial policies of apartheid.

Desmond Tutu still marvels at Mandela's actions. "For someone who had been the commander in chief of the military wing of the ANC to be at the forefront of persuading our people to lay down their arms and then to actually live this out, is incredible! He even invited his white jailer to his inauguration