

Research Africa Reviews Vol. 5, No. 3, December 2021

These reviews may be found on the RA Reviews website at:

<https://sites.duke.edu/researchafrica/ra-reviews/volume-5-issue-3-dec-2021>

Reviewing Tutu: A Man of the Cloth, A Man of Integrity

Allister Sparks and Mpho A. Tutu, *Tutu: The Authorised Portrait*. Publisher: Auckland, PQ Blackwell Limited and Johannesburg: Pan MacMillan South Africa, 2011. 318 pp. ISBN # 9780230759954.

Sarojini Nadar, Tinyiko Maluleke, Dietrich Werner, Vicentia Kgabe, and Rudolf Hinz (Eds), *Ecumenical Encounters with Desmond Mpilo Tutu: Visions for Justice, Dignity, and Peace*. Stellenbosch: Sun Media; Belville: University of the Western Cape Press, 2021; 358 pages. ISBN-10: 1990995063 and ISBN-13: 978-1990995064.

Reviewed by: *Muhammed Haron*, Associate Researcher at Stellenbosch University, South Africa.

1. Introduction

On the 26 December 2021, South Africa was informed that one of its noble sons, the former Archbishop Dr. Rev. Desmond M. Tutu (hereafter: Tutu) who authored the provocatively titled text *God is not Christian: Speaking Truth in the Time of Crisis* (2013), returned to God. Though some received the news as a shock and expressed sadness when they heard about his death in the social media, many were aware that he – unlike others - was more than ready to go back to the Lord who had created us all. By the time Tutu closed his eyes, he was 90 years and inching his way to celebrating 91; though he did not reach this age, one can confidently state that Tutu lived his eventful life to the full.

In this essay, the purpose is to review two books that reflected on Tutu's hectic socio-spiritual life. The two books, which are under review, were published at different times; one came from the press three months ago and the other was printed ten years ago in 2011. Before dipping into both publications, the following section acts as a backdrop to the review; it turns its focus to Tutu's life. And in doing so, it weaves into the selected works that Tutu penned or that he co-authored over the years. These will, however, not appear chronologically but, to some extent, thematically.

Since it is beyond the scope of this review essay to insert each book, it will attempt to comment briefly on those that it mentions. Thereafter, the review essay will focus on the two books.

2. Tutu's Life and Works: A Discerning Perspective

Indeed, we, South Africans, were blessed to have had this honourable figure in our midst and we were/are glad that he was the nation's – nay, the African continent's (if not the world's) - moral compass and conscience for all these years. Having been 'a man of the cloth,' he stood out as a humble person and a self-effacing individual. Compared to many who wore the Christian robes as men/women of the cloth, he was a cut above them all; he was among a handful of religious leaders who were unafraid to speak 'truth to power' in (and even outside) times of crisis.

From the time he got robed and took up the task as 'a man of the cloth' in the Anglican Church at the beginning of the 1960s, he demonstrated to all South Africans (and the world) that he was no weak and timid priest; no, he showed that he was a bold, confident, courageous, and daring Christian pastor. *Crying in the Wilderness: The Struggle for Justice in South Africa* (1982), one of Tutu's early texts that went through different editions, revealed his utmost disgust with the South African oppressive system and his passion for the formation of a just society. In 1983, co-editors Mthobi Mutloatse and John Webster collected Tutu's sermons and speeches, and these appeared in their edited *Hope and Suffering: Sermons and Speeches*.

Despite the adverse conditions that he - and all of us - faced throughout the apartheid period, Tutu remained a jovial and spirited soul; he loved life and treasured everyone who formed part of *The Rainbow People of God: The Making of a Peaceful Revolution* (1996). In Tutu's co-authored work with the Dalai Lama, he and his co-author underscored in *The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World* (2016) their respective notions of being happy whether they encountered these in suppressive surroundings or whether they found themselves in peaceful environments.

Tutu undoubtedly belonged to a coterie of individuals who spoke their minds whenever they needed to do so and wherever they found themselves. Tutu did so without fearing of being hurt or harmed. He was, most definitely, a moral voice that could not be silenced; he famously said: 'I wish I could shut up... but I won't'. He was among those who stressed the importance of the act of forgiveness. Tutu's single authored *No Future without Forgiveness* (1999) and his co-authored text (with Mpho Tutu) underlined that; in the single authored publication, Tutu argued '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' (see [https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/165811.No Future Without Forgiveness](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/165811.No_Future_Without_Forgiveness)).

Many years later, he co-authored with Mpho Tutu *The Book of forgiving: The Fourfold Path for Healing Ourselves and Our World* (2013). This text, to some degree, complemented and expanded Tutu's authored book in which 'forgiveness' was not only a crucial concept in a changing society, but a critical one if the society wanted to experience reconciliation and justice in all sectors and on all levels. Prior to their co-authored publication, they produced another that addressed *Made for Goodness: And Why This Makes All the Difference* (2011). Besides giving attention to forgiveness and goodness as positive transformative concepts, Tutu was defiant in and outside South Africa.

While he openly defied the arrogant apartheid government, he also articulated his position regarding the discrimination and injustice that were meted out against Palestine's Muslim and Christian communities by the arrogant Israeli authorities. As expected, he was accused by sections of the Israeli society of having been an anti-Semite; a graphic term that was incorrectly and unfairly ascribed to him by his critics. That aside and in this post-apartheid neoliberal era, he never shied away from critiquing the democratic government for its inability in dealing with, among others, the prevailing socio-political and economic injustices that most of us – as South Africans – continue to experience.

One can re-state that Tutu was 'the voice of the voiceless' (as Mandela described him [p. v]); this came to the fore in the 1980s when he was awarded the Nobel Prize (in 1984) and after having skilfully served as chair of 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission' (TRC, circa 1996-1998). In the post-TRC event, Tutu frankly uttered his dismay at the democratic government's failure to address the TRC's unfinished business and its ineffectiveness in bringing closure to many families whose breadwinners such as Steve Biko (d.1977) – who were in the forefront in the struggle - were killed at the hands of apartheid South Africa's Security Branch (SB). To date, none of the SB members - except for one or two - were brought to the courts to be found guilty for their horrible and unforgivable misdeeds. For the record, Tutu was approached to write a preface to one of the new editions of Biko's famous stirring texts that was titled *I Write What I Like*; this work was first published posthumously in 1978; and thereafter it went through a few editions.

Nonetheless, for us all – apart from some – Tutu was a daring inspirational figure whose life was known to all. It is generally agreed that as he, along with Nelson Mandela, became one of South Africa's iconic personalities. Tutu, like Mandela, undoubtedly exuded charisma; a set of magnetic characteristics that drew us to his persona. All of us were endearingly attracted to him and in different ways invariably influenced by him. Anyone, who ventured to open Tutu's *An African Prayer Book* (1995) and flipped through its pages, would have read or would have overheard the moving, '...simple prayer of the penniless Bushman, the (emotive) words of some of the greatest Church fathers (Augustine and Athanasius), ... (the) jubilant voices from South Africa's struggle for freedom, and even (the) prayers from the Africa diasporas of North America and the

Caribbean' (see <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/165813>. [An African Prayer Book](#)). Together with this prayer book, one would too have been moved by the wonderfully illustrated and essentially edited work, namely *Believe: The Words and Inspiration of Desmond Tutu* (2007). Apart from being studded with Tutu's quotable quotes, it basically captured his timeless messages of peace, freedom, and love. Soon after this work reached the book market, another was in the making and it was titled *The Words of Desmond Tutu* (2008), which was put together by Tutu and Naomi Tutu. Since Tutu was rightly obsessed with universal concepts (peace, freedom, and love), which were mentioned moments ago and that formed part of a list of positive ingredients for any society that Tutu made mention of in his writings, he was also fixated with concepts such as 'hope'. The latter term, for example, was a pivotal theme in his *God has a Dream: A Vision of Hope for Our Times* (2011) and *Hope and Suffering* (that was already referred to earlier).

From these snippets into Tutu's life, one cannot disagree that Tutu was a remarkable person whose life was not only eventful, but it was too tasteful. Despite the depressive circumstances that he encountered, Tutu remained hopeful as noted from the works that he penned or that were written by others about him. Glancing through all of these, it became clear that each one emphasised that Tutu was a constructive optimist. Tutu's *The Essential of Desmond Tutu* (1997) that was edited by John Allen and Michael Battle's *The Wisdom of Desmond Tutu* (1998) are publications that underlined this.

And if one browsed through biographies that were written on him, it is not difficult to conclude the reasons why the authors were enamoured by his persona; each of them reassuringly wrote about Tutu's discerning life. Here is a catalogue of some that should be part of one's reading list: Marc Cooper and Greg Goldin's *Bishop Desmond Tutu* (1985), Carole Green's *Desmond Tutu: The Bishop of Peace* (1986), Elisabeth Adler's German text *Desmond Tutu* (1986), Buti Tlhangale and Itumeleng Mosala' co-edited *Hammering Swords into Ploughshares: Essays in Honour of Desmond Tutu* (1987), Adrian Hadland's *Desmond Tutu* (2002), Chris van Wyk's *Desmond Tutu* (2003), Steven Gish's *Desmond Tutu: A Biography* (2004), John Allen's *Rabble-Rouser for Peace: The Authorised Biography of Desmond Tutu* (2012), Samuel Crompton's *Desmond Tutu: Fighting Apartheid* (2014), Michael Battle's *Desmond Tutu: A Spiritual Biography of a South African Confessor* (2021), and Anisa Lawrence's *Desmond Tutu: A Thunderbolt against Injustice* (2021).

The catalogue of books in the afore-mentioned paragraph proved the interest that scholars showed in Tutu's life. While many books appeared in English, a plethora of these too appeared in other languages such as French and German. This register underlined that Tutu not only became an iconic figure in South African households, but his name circulated among readers far beyond the country's borders. Beyond these, respective writers from Europe and elsewhere

worked on and completed their biographical writings that focused on Tutu as their subject.

3. Tutu's Celebratory Biographical Books: Two Beautifully Produced Texts

3.1 The Sparks and Tutu's Illustrated Text

Back in South Africa, veteran journalist Allister Sparks, who showed a keen interest in Tutu's life especially after he had gathered and completed a book on South Africa's 1985 unrest, joined those writers that wrote informative biographies on Tutu. He, having received the David Blundy Award during 1985 and having founded the Witwatersrand University's Institute for Advanced Journalism in 1992, teamed up with Reverend Mpho Tutu; the latter, who co-authored texts with her respected father, was, at that time, the Chairperson Emeritus of the Board of the Global AIDS Alliance.

Their co-authored biography, which was titled *Tutu: The Authorised Portrait*, was edited by Douglas Abrams (see p. xiii) and it was a delightfully produced as a coffee-table text that should be considered a collector's book item. It was not only a beautifully illustrated text that chronicled Tutu's valour, but it is wonderfully worded text that recorded Tutu's conviction, related his determination, and shared his unrivalled dedication in seeing to the liberation and upliftment of the South African oppressed communities whom he described as the country's 'rainbow nation.'

For this work, the authors kindly invited Bono, the renowned musician who, according to Joseph Schimmel, was seen as a 'the main icon of the emerging church', and, according to Eugene Peterson, considered 'a prophet like John the Baptist' (<https://kimolsen.net/2012/08/16/is-u2s-bono-a-christian/>), to write the 'Foreword' (p. ix). They too graciously approached His Holiness the Buddhist Dalai Lama to pen the 'introduction' (pp. xi). Sparks and Tutu were generous in their collection for they incorporated in it over forty interviews; and all the interviewees were interviewed by Mpho Tutu. These were conducted with members of their family, selected friends, several colleagues, numerous comrades, and strident critics.

On top of that, they comprised of contributions from former USA President Barack Obama and the late former President Nelson Mandela. In addition, they inserted Mpho Tutu's interviews with chosen world leaders; among them were the former first lady Hillary Clinton, former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, former USA President Jimmy Carter, and former State Councillor of Myanmar. Alongside them, others such as Virgin Active's CEO, Richard Branson also featured (see a two-page [pp. 202-203] pic that showed those, who were interviewed and featured in this book, photographed).

Tutu: The Authorised Portrait was a commemorative book; one that celebrated the former Archbishop Desmond Tutu's eightieth birthday. Sparks and Tutu made sure that this aesthetically produced publication captured aspects of

Tutu's rich legacy; because of this, it was presented (and edited) in a unique and an attractive style. Anyone who merely browsed through it would describe it as a moving biography of a compassionate confessor and humble human being. And it may too be defined as a text that consisted of 'an unprecedented collection of images and unpublished artefacts' that were extracted from Tutu's private files.

Overall, Tutu's story, as illustrated by this book, was not only outstanding but it was and remains a stirring one. Worded differently, it was a text that commemorated Tutu's busy life, memorialized his exceptional philosophy, honoured his dedicated faith, and recorded his incredible successes. When this vividly produced and presented publication circulated in the book market and landed on the bookshelves for its readers, everyone was in awe because of its rich presentation and its informative contents. One commentator said that this work overflowed with 'illuminating revelations about Tutu's life' and that it resonated with invaluable insights into how everyone should be able 'to improve peace, fairness, and happiness in the world around us.' The authors divided the dense book into twelve chapters.

In Chapter One, they recorded stories about 'Our Real Leaders (who) are in Prison and in Exile' (pp.1-18). The latter contextualized Tutu's inputs, and they thus addressed in Chapter Two Tutu's life as 'Liberator of the Exodus' (pp.19-36). This informative chapter acted as a backdrop for the Third Chapter and herein they chatted about 'A Man of Almost Unique Value' (pp.37-48). Tutu's value as an extraordinary human in trying times caused the authors to pose a rhetorical question in Chapter Four; they asked: 'How can you love God and Hate Your Brother?' (pp. 49-76).

This significant question was meant for both foe and friend, and it appropriately set the tone for Chapter Five in which they illustrated to what degree Tutu was bold and brave; it was titled 'I do not fear them (that is, the apartheid regime)' (pp.77-110). Tutu's fearless stand against the Apartheid system reinforced his 'Faith and (support for the non-violent) Revolution' in Chapter Six (pp.111-150). The chapter referred to, among others, big-headed P. W. Botha's so-called 'reforms' retaining the discriminatory policies and using the Tri-Cameral system as a solution to the problems encountered. In this situation, Tutu cleverly used his Nobel Laurette status appealing to the international society to apply sanctions against the unmoved apartheid government.

Turning to Chapter Seven and considering how the authors described Tutu's leadership when 'speaking truth to power', it underscored Tutu's faithful position in which 'We Can't Argue with God' (pp.151-166). This was complemented by Chapter Eight that reflected on how, with faith in our South African hearts, 'We Were Unstoppable' (pp. 167-182) against the Apartheid government; this was so because 'God is on Our Side' (p.176). When drifting to Chapter Nine, the authors confessed that 'There (Were/) Are Things That Went Wrong' (pp. 183-202); these wrongs were exposed throughout the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC circa 1996-1998) that Tutu competently

chaired. The picture on p.197, in fact, visibly depicted Tutu with his head and hidden face on the desk; this conveyed a serious message to the South African political leadership and the world.

Though Tutu thought that he would find rest in the post-TRC stage, it propelled him to take up other responsibilities beyond South Africa's borders. He began to contribute in significant reconciliatory ways to conflict ridden societies in different parts of the globe. These and other issues were discoursed about in Chapter Ten that was titled 'The Voice of the Voiceless' (pp.203-224); at the end of that chapter, the authors mentioned Tutu's respect for former President Jacob Zuma but, at the same time, they recorded his harsh criticisms of Zuma's administration's despicable policies towards the disadvantage communities.

Chapter Eleven captured Tutu's multifaceted personality by reflecting on him as someone possessed with 'A Quicksilver Spirit' (225-244); in this chapter, the authors unpacked some of Tutu's character traits such as being an emotionally charged person and a contemplative prayerful being. And as they closed their book with Chapter Twelve that was titled 'We Are All God's Children' (pp. 245-260). Herein they affirmed that Tutu was an unusual prelate; someone who boldly declared that 'God is not Christian.' This statement Tutu used as a title for his provocatively worded book that was referred to above, and one that maintained that all people were and are God's children.

In winding up the review of the Sparks and Tutu's book, which consisted of a bibliography and index, a few questions should be posed; these refer to missing elements in this book. The one question is: why did the authors not draw on views and opinions that have been expressed by non-Christian groups – setting aside the Dalai Lama - such as 'Jews for Justice' and 'Call of Islam' members that aired their anti-apartheid stance and that openly supported Tutu? Another that comes to mind is: How come the voices of, for example, Ebrahim Rasool, Farid Esack (both former Call of Islam leaders), Rashied Omar (former Muslim Youth Movement of South Africa president) or Nazeem Mohamed (former Cape-based Muslim Judicial Council president [see p.157 where he was photographed marching arm-in-arm along with others]), who were relatively closely connected to Tutu, have not been included/recorded? And one more question is: Why has the issue of inter-religious dialogue (and not ecumenical encounters), which he so ardently encouraged and led, not been given its rightful place in this publication?

Though these questions will not be elaborated on in this review essay, they have been raised to underline that any work on this noble soul must bring the voices of others, who belong to other religious traditions, into the conversation about him. Their inputs would possibly provide a holistic view of him, and it would reveal that though Tutu was a committed Anglican, he was not owned by that Church, but by us all who are affiliated to other traditions. In fact, these questions apply to the next book under review as well. So, here the attention turns to this work that appeared ten years after the Sparks and Tutu compilation.

3.2 Nadar, Maluleke, Werner, Kgabe, & Hinz's Commemorative Text

Now the questions that were posed in the two closing paragraphs in the afore-mentioned section, to some extent, apply to Sarojini Nadar, who is the University of the Western Cape's (UWC) Director of the Desmond Tutu Centre for Religion and Social Justice, and co-editors' book too. Their book directly addressed the *Ecumenical Encounters on Desmond Mpilo Tutu: Visions for Justice, Dignity, and Peace*, but unfortunately did not cover Tutu's 'Inter-Religious Encounters'; a theme that should have been given attention in a subsection of this pleasingly edited compilation. This volume, like the previous one, also did not consider including an analysis or an insight into the series of Desmond Tutu Peace Lectures; a set of lectures that assessed - partially if not wholly - aspects of Tutu's ideas)see <https://www.tutu.org.za/programmes/peace-lectures/>.

Though Nadar, who is the UWC Centre's leading theological figure, was the driving force behind this rich edited project, it seems that it was respectively initiated by Rev. Dr. Rudolf Hinz (the former head of the Africa Desk of Evangelische Kirche in Deuthchland) and Prof. Dr. Dietrich Werner (a senior World Council of Churches [WCC] staff member and WCC's former head of Theological Education). According to the Geneva-based Global Ethics (<https://www.globethics.net/web/desmond-tutu>) site, Hinz and Werner registered, by end of 2019 (one assumes), the 'Ecumenical Encounters with Desmond Tutu' titled project; and they inserted a sub-theme that reflected on 'Memories – Challenge – Unfinished Visions'. The project, which began at the opening of year 2020, ended with an edited book in October 2021; it was another commemorative volume that consciously coincided with Tutu's 90th birthday on the 7th of October.

Hinz and Werner mentioned in their online 'mission' piece that, 'The idea has come up in dialogues between different persons who, in the past decades, have more intensely collaborated with Desmond Tutu or have been involved with questions of the relationships between churches in Germany and churches in South Africa.' And together the two agreed '... to produce a small collection of voices and perspectives to honour Desmond Tutu and to recollect some of the memories which have marked ecumenical relations in his period'. They principally wanted Tutu's '... colleagues, friends, and companions ... to look back in gratitude and to shed some light on essential dimensions and theological, political, or social aspects which marked the work of Desmond Tutu in former decades' (see <https://www.globethics.net/web/desmond-tutu/mission>).

Considering the general rationale for this ambitious project, they identified Nadar as their point person and the project's lead editor. Nadar brought on board other prominent theologians besides the two Germans, Hinz and Werner, to be part of the team of co-editors. The other two that joined this worthy project were Prof. Tinyiko S. Maluleke (recently appointed Tshwane University of

Technology Vice-Chancellor) and Dr. Vicentia R. Kgabe (recently appointed Bishop of the Anglican Church of Lesotho); though Hinz and Werner had hoped Professor Isabel Phiri would be part of the editorial team, this was not to be.

In any case, this five-person editorial team identified over 70 theologians/religionists who, they felt confident, would enrich, and enhance this publication's status within the religio-theological circles. The team of co-editors were part of the list of contributors (including themselves) that decided to honour Tutu's life and works. Hinz and Werner's understanding was that the collection of short and long essays would contain diverse reflections on the anti-Apartheid struggle ecumenically in which Tutu, as a known pragmatic political preacher, played a key role.

The two opined that Tutu's pivotal position was that of a political prophet and activist intellectual. They pointed out that Tutu's actual encounters, along with his tangible accomplishments, 'shaped ongoing faith-based, activist, and academic pursuits for justice, peace and dignity.' And they highlighted that, 'Anyone familiar with his outstanding contributions to the promotion of justice, dignity and peace, will know that a hallmark of Desmond Tutu's celebrated style is his use of narrative and real-life stories' (see <https://bibleandbookcenter.com/read/ecumenical-encounters-with-desmond-mpilo-tutu/>).

For this publication, Piyushi Kotecha, who is the chairperson of the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation, was asked to pen the Foreword (pp. xi-xii) titled 'A Textured Tapestry of Hope and Learning Worldwide', and Sorajini Nadar wrote the 'Introduction' (xiii-xxx) with its focus on 'A Moral Constitution for Justice, Dignity, and Peace.' The latter piece addressed the volume's sub-theme. After these two entries, the editorial team listed the name of the contributors. The co-editors, however, divided the text into three thematic parts and these were further sub-divided. Since there are too many chapters and sub-chapters, the review only selected a few that offered some insights into the chapters.

The first part concentrated on the notion of 'Justice' and the first sub-theme was on 'Racism and Resistance against Apartheid;' this sub-section contained 10 entries. In the opening chapter, '... Hope, Hopelessness, and the Inspiration for the Struggle' (pp.3-10), Allen Boesak, who was a fellow leader in the anti-Apartheid fight, tangibly argued that Tutu was the embodiment of hope. The chapter (pp. 14-18) by Michael Battle, who had authored Tutu's biography, pursued his critical '...Reflections on Race and Religion.' Herein Battle briefly mentioned the Church's complicity in the North Atlantic slave trade and provided his understanding of these two key concepts within and beyond the South African context.

In the second sub-theme, the text fixed its attention on 'Liberation Theology and Theological Education;' and it included 7 chapters. Chapter 12 (pp.52-57) was written by Werner; one of specialists in Theological Education

and who conceptualized this project. He addressed the ‘Contextualization and Spiritual Transformation in Theological Education in Africa – Visions Inspired by Desmond Tutu;’ though an ambitious task desiring to cover the whole of the continent, he managed to share Tutu’s vision. Chapter 17, however, turned to the ‘Arch Anecdotes’: (with) Reflections on the Establishment of the Desmond Tutu Chair and Centre at UWC’ (pp.75-82).

Directing the attention to the third sub-theme, the text turned to ‘Gender Justice and Sexual Diversity’ that consisted of 9 inputs. Mpho Tutu van Furth’s Chapter 18 offered a short piece ‘... Making Ma Leah Tutu (– the Archbishop’s life partner -) Visible’ (p.83). Wilma Jakobsen’s Chapter 20, which was titled ‘... Tutu, Gender, and Sexuality’ (pp. 88-92), argued that though gender equality and women ordination did not form part of Tutu’s upbringing, this radically changed because of his diverse experiences of social transformation. Vicentia Kgabe, one of the co-editors, addressed ‘Tutu’s visionary leadership ...’ in Chapter 21 (pp.93-98); she underscored herein that Tutu’s inspirational example and teachings influenced some – like herself - women’s decisions to enter and serve the Church.

At this point, the edited text shifted to the second theme that conceptualized and unpacked the notion of ‘Dignity’; like the previous section, it too contained a set of sub-themes with the first, which has 7 chapters, focusing on the twin concepts of ‘Humor and Humanity.’ Anyone, who knows or has listened to Tutu’s speeches, will agree that Tutu was indeed a humorous priest. Maluleke’s Chapter 27 titled ‘The Liberating Humor of Desmond Tutu’ (pp.129-138) appropriately captured this dimension of this ‘man of the cloth’, and the same applies to Fulata Moyo; Moyo shared in Chapter 28 certain views about ‘Desmond Tutu, Humor, and Social Justice’ (pp.139-143).

‘Ubuntu, African Theology, and Leadership’ is the second sub-theme (with 10 chapters) that featured in this part of the book. Hans Engdahl’s short Chapter 40 on ‘... Exercise of Leadership in Africa’ (pp.183-184) reflected on Tutu’s participation in the All Africa Conference of Churches while he was its president from 1987 to 1997. And Chapter 42 consisted of Edwin Arrison’s petitioning ‘... UbuTutu Eucharistic Prayer’ (pp.187-188), and Betty Govinden composed ‘... Two Birthday Poems’ in Chapter 43 (pp.189-191).

The second sub-theme under ‘Dignity’ addressed thoughts (8 chapters) that related to ‘Transnational Solidarities.’ One of these was Brian Brown’s Chapter 44; herein he gave consideration to ‘...Connecting Struggles for Justice in Palestine and South Africa’ (pp. 192-196). Werner von Hoerschelmann’s Chapter 51 interestingly examined ‘Desmond Tutu’s Role in Establishing Ecumenical Relationships of the Evangelical Church in Germany with Churches in Southern Africa’ (pp.221-225).

The final part of the book was themed ‘Peace’; it recorded three sub-themes. The first of the three was on ‘Prayer and Politics’ with 8 chapters forming its contents. Raymond van Diemel’s Chapter 56 assessed the ‘New Hope for South

Africa – Desmond Tutu’s Road to the Nobel Peace Prize’ (pp. 242-245); the author basically underlined that Tutu, like other brave souls that have passed on, did not desire power; he was obsessed in serving the South African society and other nations with deep humility. It is indeed this humility that was further illustrated in Liz Carmichael’s Chapter 57 that was titled ‘The Humility of a Peacemaker: Negotiating the National Peace Accord, 1991’ (pp. 246-251), and for having had such a honest figure in our world, Chapter 59 contained Gerhard Rein’s petite prayer: ‘Let Us Pray’ (pp. 255-255).

Jumping to the next sub-theme in the book’s final part, the co-editors inserted 6 chapters that dealt with ‘Reconciliation and Resistance.’ Nico Koopman’s Chapter 61 spoke about ‘Embodying Restitutive Forgiveness: (which became) The Lasting Legacy of Desmond Mpilo Tutu’ (pp. 260-265). A chapter away from Koopman’s was Anne Jaborg’s brief ‘Embrace: A Short Story of Embodying Reconciliation’ (Chapter 63, pp. 269-269). And the final sub-theme rounded up the book with its focus on ‘Religious Diversity and Religious Plurality;’ one of the 6 chapters was UWC’s Lee-Shae Salma Scharnick-Udemans’ piece and it zoomed in on ‘Religious Privilege and Intolerance: Unveiling the Rainbow Nation’ (Chapter 67, pp. 283-290). And the book’s very final chapter was the contribution of the University of Cape Town’s Sa’diyya Shaikh; the latter discussed the ‘Spiritual Fragrances, Social Horizons: A Muslim Tribute to Archbishop Desmond Tutu’ (Chapter 71, pp. 306-307).

While the latter chapter implied that Tutu chose one of the many doors that paved the way to God’s Divine Presence, the former illustrated that South Africa’s rainbow nation was constitutionally protected; and she stressed that they, compared to others elsewhere where there are restrictions, enjoyed religious freedom. The underlying point that the essays made was that the reconciliatory Tutu had noticeably contributed towards this transforming environment because of Tutu’s critical and leading role in the anti-Apartheid struggle.

4. Towards a Conclusion

The two reviewed books are indeed informative publications; these were intentionally prepared to celebrate and commemorate one of South Africa’s iconic religious personalities. While there are a few of these ‘men of the cloth’ who made their public mark and have left their personal legacies from which our communities continue to draw inspiration, Tutu was in a class of his own if not a cut above the rest.

Though Tutu was not a prophet in the conventional sense of the word, he was undoubtedly a respected religious reformer within and outside Christianity, and he was a political pastor who may also be described as ‘the voice of the voiceless.’ More importantly, he was a man who was a determined anti-Apartheid combatant physically and spiritually. He fought discriminatory beliefs and practices at all levels; and he did so not only within South Africa’s porous border but far beyond them.

Now, this may be attributed to the fact that Tutu saw ‘injustice’ for what it was; for him, it was the same globally. For that reason, when Tutu’s attention was drawn to the bigoted internal policies of the Zionist Israeli government, he did not keep his mouth; he spoke out against the atrocious acts, and he gave his support to the oppressed Palestinians.

As a practical political priest, Tutu did not permit himself to be muzzled or shackled by an autocratic state or a democratic government. When the Dalai Lama was refused a visa to come to South Africa, he spoke out highlighting the democratic country’s double-standards. He was a man who spoke his mind. Tutu was among those that no system was able ‘shut up’; and he belonged to a coterie of religious leaders who spoke ‘truth to power’ even though he was aware that he might imprisoned or maimed or even killed.

Returning to the short pieces and relatively long reflective essays that were penned by individuals who came from different backgrounds, it is obvious that some of them reinforced the points that were made in the previous paragraphs and in the books. Some of these contributors narrated their perceptive comments and discerning reflections quite eloquently, and these added to everyone’s real appreciation of Tutu as ‘a man of the cloth’ and ‘a man of integrity’. Those who relayed their personal memoirs provided informative insights that were not read or heard before.

Nonetheless, the various narratives and different stories undergirded the fact that, despite Tutu’s shortcomings and frailties as a human being, he possessed strong character traits that pushed him to hold onto ‘hope’ and remain ‘optimistic’. Tutu’s reliance on God was palpable; the prayers he prayed were noticeable, the messages he conveyed were perceptible, and the speeches he made pointed to the fact that God was uppermost in his mind as he pursued his heroic struggle for justice, valiant fight for peace, noble scuffle for love, and noteworthy contest to return to those oppressed and suppressed their dignity.

That aside, it may be said that each of the photo-essays and revealing chapters succeeded to capture essential aspects of Tutu’s life and works. Some demonstrated to what extent Tutu’s impact was witnessed nationally and globally; they illustrated that it was observable in the ecumenical sectors and among inter-religious circles. He embodied ecumenical cum religious reconciliation wherever he was and wherever he went. Though these traits are difficult to emulate, he left an unforgettable legacy that have fortunately been collected orally and in written texts.

So, these reviewed books (along with others that were published over the years) should be viewed as tangible tributes to ‘a man of integrity’. They were written with sincere intentions of honouring a unique extraordinary person; a person who lived in our midst. While both books’ contributors adopted various approaches ranging from sociological to theological methods, the two works are undoubtedly memorial and inspirational collections if not recollections. Both texts are significant ones that highlighted Tutu’s determined love for justice, his

unquestioned dedication towards peace, and how he reminded us of all - in his speeches and writings - of the crucial importance of every being's dignity. Unlike other Christian leaders in and outside South Africa, Tutu stood out and constantly stressed that we are all God's children.

One need only refer to books and related publications that captured his being. For example, it is beyond doubt that he was a person who was – most of the time – around for the people and by the people. He was a figure, unlike others who filled the same position, that never stood aloof of the crowds. Nay, he was among the crowds; he socialized and mingled with them without feeling threatened.

So, whenever Tutu was surrounded by crowds, he was kept safe; and he experienced safety. Tutu was by their side since he experienced the true spirit of ubuntu. He considered himself one of them and not different or separate from them. Wherever he went, Tutu carried with him his perpetual smile and his infectious laughter. Whenever a tragedy occurred, he sincerely shed tears for those who were killed, for the victims who were maimed, and for the orphans whose parents died. This may be attributed to the trust he had in his people and the confidence that they had in him; it was a mutual emotion.

Let it be repeated: Tutu was not merely 'a man of the cloth', but he was 'a man of integrity;' nay, he was an ethical being, moral man, and principled pastor. He was a man who embodied and lived Ubuntu.

Research Africa

Copyright © 2021 by Research Africa, (research_africa-editor@duke.edu), all rights reserved. RA allows for copy and redistribution of the material in any medium or format, provided that full and accurate credit is given to the author, the date of publication, and the location of the review on the RA website. You may not distribute the modified material. RA reserves the right to withdraw permission for republication of individual reviews at any time and for any specific case. For any other proposed uses, contact RA's Editor-in-Chief. The opinions represented in the reviews and published on the RA Reviews website are not necessarily those held by RA and its Review editorial team.