John Allen

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ABOUT THE BOOK

Once labelled South Africa’s ‘Public Enemy Number One’, Archbishop Desmond Tutu is no stranger to controversy. He is a passionate and outspoken advocate for human rights who has confronted injustice at the highest levels. In 1984, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and, in 1995, President Nelson Mandela named him Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In *Rabble-Rouser for Peace*, you will discover the true legacy of this remarkable man, a man who has undoubtedly shaped modern history.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JOHN ALLEN is a South African journalist who has reported on and worked with Desmond Tutu for thirty years. He has served as director of communications of South Africa's groundbreaking Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and of Trinity Church, Wall Street, in New York City. He is a former president of the South African Society of Journalists and has won awards in South Africa for defense of press freedom and in the United States for excellence in church journalism. He lives in Cape Town, South Africa.

ALSO BY JOHN ALLEN

Editor, The Rainbow People of God, *by Desmond Tutu*
Editor, The Essential Desmond Tutu

Rabble-Rouser for Peace

The Authorized Biography of Desmond Tutu

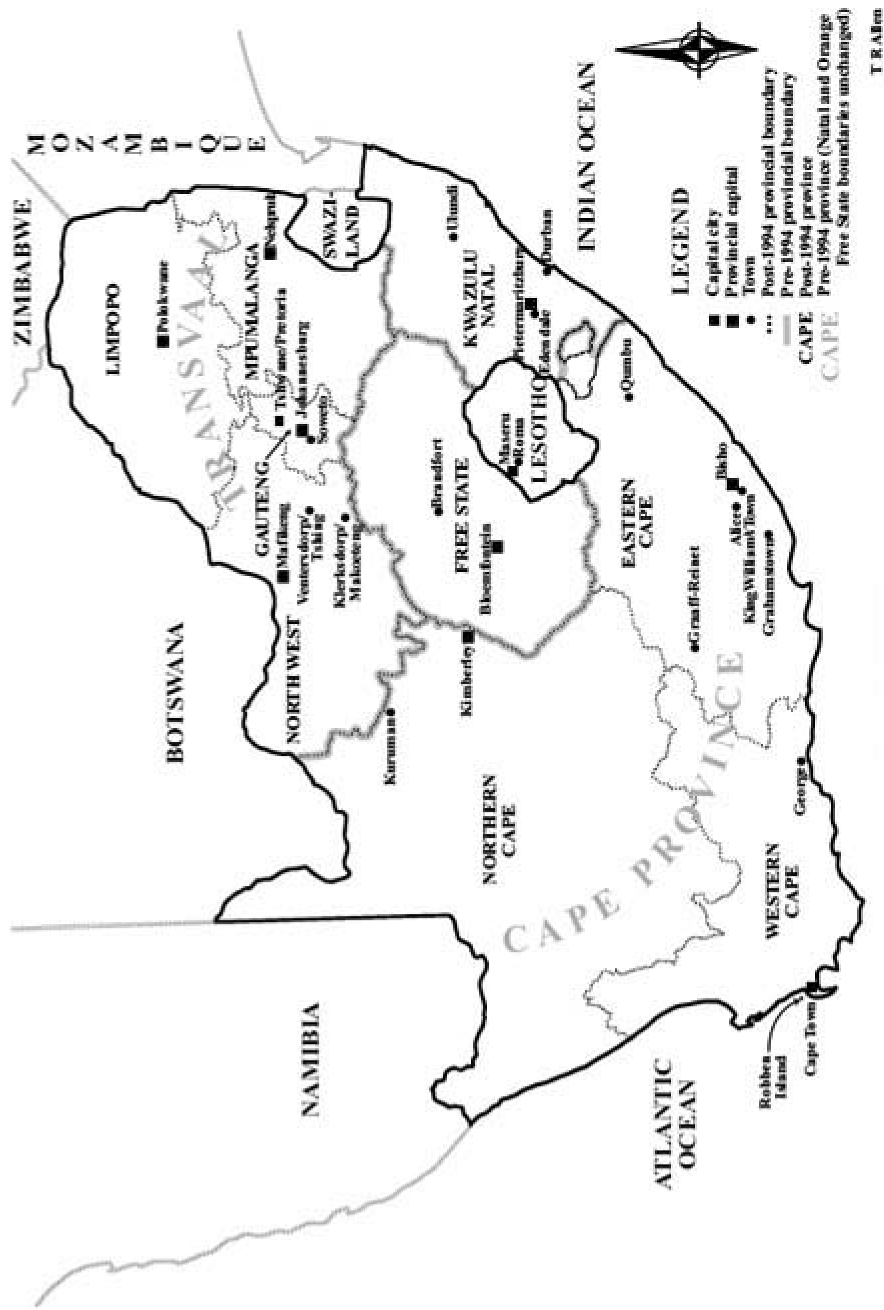
John Allen

London • Sydney • Auckland • Johannesburg

God bless Africa
Guard our children
Guide our leaders
And give us peace

—adapted from a prayer
by Trevor Huddleston,
Community of the Resurrection

Tutu’s Travels in Africa



South Africa

Gauteng Province

PROLOGUE

DESMOND TUTU TENSED in the backseat of his car as he left Bishopscourt, his official residence as Anglican archbishop of Cape Town, late in the afternoon of Wednesday, March 16, 1988. A tight knot formed in the pit of his stomach. Usually this happened when he was summoned to defuse confrontations in the city's black townships, regular occurrences in which he often stood between two groups spoiling for a fight: on the one side, defiant students carrying bricks and stones; on the other, heavily armed policemen with fingers on their triggers. Today was different. As Tutu's chaplain and driver, Chris Ahrends, drove out through the imposing white gate posts, he turned north toward the city center (downtown Cape Town), where the archbishop had an appointment at Tuynhuys, the Cape Town office of P. W. Botha, also known as Piet Wapen ("Piet Weapon") or die Groot Krokodil ("the Great Crocodile"). Botha was the state president of South Africa.

The thirteen-kilometer (eight-mile) drive from Bishopscourt to Tuynhuys offered an array of snapshots symbolizing past and current oppression. Bishopscourt was part[1] of an estate owned by South Africa's first white settler in the seventeenth century. The archbishop's home—a large whitewashed two-story mansion with acres of gardens—was the oldest privately owned house in the country. The agapanthus and cannas that grew there were said to come from stock planted by Dutch colonists. Beyond the estate, to the south[2], were the remains of a wild almond hedge, grown by the colonists to keep out of their settlement the likes of Tutu—the indigenous people of South Africa. In 1988, Tutu's second year[3] as archbishop, he was living in Bishopscourt

illegally, having refused to ask for permission to live in what apartheid designated a “white area.”

The route into the city[4] ran along the eastern flank of Table Mountain, originally covered by fynbos (fine, or delicate, bush), the beautiful vegetation—unique to the southwestern tip of Africa—that makes up the smallest and richest of the world’s floral biomes. Now the slopes were built up and occupied by the wealthiest Capetonians, whites who had displaced the fynbos with big houses and gardens in which they grew foreign, if also beautiful, plants from their countries of origin. As Tutu’s car rounded Devil’s Peak on the northeastern corner of the mountain, he could look out over Table Bay, the harbor that had attracted Dutch sailors as a refreshment station on their way to the east. Beyond the harbor was Robben Island, used since the earliest days of colonialism to jail any who dared resist the incursions of the settlers. Farther down the hill, just before the car dipped into the city center, an enormous scar of overgrown, rubble-strewn land came into view. This was District Six[5], which had been a shabby and poverty-stricken, but nevertheless a vibrant and thriving multiracial community until the 1960s, when Botha initiated a process that led to its destruction and the deportation of its people to windswept sandy wastes far out of town.

Ahrends pulled up at Botha’s office a few minutes before 6 PM. This building too dated back to Dutch rule: the original structure, de Tuynhuys (the “Garden House”), had been built by the Dutch East India Company as a guesthouse alongside the gardens which supplied passing ships. Tutu had been there before, but never at a time of such high tension between church and state. Three years earlier, in September 1984, the third major uprising against apartheid—the one that was to start its final collapse—had begun in the industrial area around the Vaal River, south of Johannesburg. Just a few weeks previously[6], on February 24, 1988, Botha’s police minister, Adriaan Vlok, had outlawed

the activities of seventeen organizations involved in the uprising, including coalitions representing two of the country's largest political forces. In response, the South African[7] Council of Churches had convened an emergency meeting of church leaders, who resolved to pick up where the banned organizations had left off. The church leaders also decided to fly to Cape Town, seat of South Africa's parliament, to convey their decision to the government.

On Monday, February 29[8], 25 church leaders and about 100 other clergy and lay workers gathered at St. George's Cathedral, Cape Town, which backed onto the government complex incorporating Parliament and Tuynhuys. At a short service, the general secretary of the Council of Churches, Frank Chikane, read out a petition addressed to Botha and members of Parliament. The Anglican activist Sid Luckett instructed members of the congregation in the precepts of nonviolent direct action. He warned them that although the police, already swarming outside, were unlikely to use tear gas in the city center, they had used dogs, sjamboks (rawhide whips), and water cannons before.

Then, row by row, arms linked, the congregation went out of the cathedral, the church leaders wearing their robes of office, intent on delivering the petition to Parliament. In the front row were Tutu; Chikane; the Catholic archbishop of Cape Town, Stephen Naidoo; the president of the Methodist Church, Khoza Mgojo; and the president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Allan Boesak. A line of blue-uniformed policemen, arms also linked, swung out across the street to block their way. An officer with a bullhorn told the protesters that their action was illegal. He warned them to disperse. They refused and knelt on the sidewalk. The police arrested the leaders, marched them away, and then opened up on the rest of the procession with a water cannon. A few of the clergy[9] clung to parking meters, but others were sent tumbling down the street. That night, BBC Television's South African correspondent told his viewers:

“The church has unmistakably[10] taken over the front line of antiapartheid protest.”

However, the church leaders’ protest was not the subject of Tutu’s appointment at Tuynhuys on March 16. He was there on a pastoral mission, to plead for the lives of the Sharpeville Six, five men and a woman facing execution. They were from an area best known for a massacre that took place there in 1960, and they had been convicted of killing the deputy mayor of Sharpeville on the first day of the Vaal uprising in 1984. Their case had generated an international campaign for clemency—not only had the police investigators assaulted witnesses and suspects, but most of those convicted were accused not of contributing directly to the deputy mayor’s death but simply of being part of a crowd acting in common purpose with the killers. On Monday, March 14, the sheriff[11] of the Supreme Court in Pretoria had informed the six that they were to be hanged on Friday, March 18. Wardens had measured the circumference of their necks, and their heights and weights, so that the hangman could calculate the size of the nooses and the length of the ropes. Then the prisoners had been led to a place in Pretoria’s Central Prison that was called the “pot” because its occupants’ emotions were said to boil over as they contemplated their death.

As Tutu waited to see Botha, the Sharpeville Six were thirty-seven hours away from execution. The next evening, Thursday, the six could expect a treat—a whole deboned chicken—for supper. Fellow prisoners would help them through the night by singing African choruses. On Friday morning, chaplains would pray with them. Wardens would pull white hoods over their heads, then lift up flaps over their faces so they could see the steps of the gallows. The gallows chamber was designed to hang seven people at a time. Each of the six could expect a warden to lead him or her to a place on a trapdoor marked by two painted feet. The hangman would then drop the flaps over their faces, put

nooses over their heads, and pull a lever, and the trapdoor would fall away.

When news came of the impending[12] executions, Tutu called the ambassadors of Botha's closest allies—Britain, the United States, and Germany—and asked to speak urgently to their heads of government. Margaret Thatcher telephoned him the same day, as did Ronald Reagan's secretary of state, George Shultz. Both assured him that they were urging clemency. The British ambassador, Robin Renwick, carried a message from Thatcher to the South African government that afternoon. Reagan made a personal appeal to Botha, and Shultz called the foreign minister, R. F. (Pik) Botha, to underline its seriousness. Helmut Kohl made a similar appeal on behalf of the twelve governments of the European Community, and Kohl's foreign policy adviser telephoned Tutu on Wednesday to brief him.

Tutu and his personal assistant, Matt Esau[13], went into Botha's office. It was the first time Esau had met Botha, and he was struck by the president's size; alongside Tutu, who stood only about 1.6 meters (five feet four inches) tall, Botha was, in Esau's words, a groot, fris Boer (a "big, beefy Afrikaner"). Esau was also struck by the lighting—and Robin Renwick wrote later that being received in Botha's dimly lit study conjured up images of what it must have been like to call on Hitler in his bunker. Botha was accompanied by the director general of his office and by one or two cabinet ministers.

Tutu told Botha[14] he was not appealing for the Sharpeville Six on legal grounds. As a minister of the gospel he had come to plead for mercy, which was not to be confused with justice. He was opposed[15] to the death penalty in principle—in 1982 he had successfully pleaded for the lives of white South African mercenaries sentenced to death for trying to overthrow the government of the Seychelles islands. Hanging the Sharpeville Six, he now warned, could spark new violence, particularly because the following Monday,

March 21, was the anniversary of the 1960 Sharpeville massacre. It would be a statesmanlike act, Tutu said, to grant a reprieve. Botha replied that South Africa's courts were independent and he did not want to encroach on them. He operated within certain limits when he exercised his prerogative to grant clemency; this case did not fall within those limits. Botha provided only a glimmer of hope: the trial judge was hearing an application for a stay of execution in Pretoria, he said. If the court decided there were other circumstances that he needed to look at, he would do so.

At that point the atmosphere deteriorated. Botha said there was something else he wanted to discuss: the church leaders' petition. The original of the document had been mailed to the president the day after the abortive march, somewhat wrinkled after being drenched by the water cannon. Botha handed Tutu a four-page reply, then started to berate him. Wagging his finger in the belligerent style that was his trademark, he excoriated the archbishop for instigating an illegal march; for allegedly drawing up the petition only after the march; for supposedly marching in front of a communist flag; for advocating sanctions; for supporting the outlawed liberation movement, the African National Congress (ANC); and for having the temerity to invite Thatcher, Reagan, and Kohl to interfere in South Africa's domestic affairs.

At first Tutu restrained himself. Botha's behavior was not out of character—he was said to drive his own cabinet ministers to tears. But as Tutu tried and failed to get a word in edgewise, and Botha jumped from point to point, an anger born of decades of observing the consequences of apartheid stirred within him. Tutu thought to himself: "Our people have suffered[16] for so long. I might never get this chance again." Shaking a finger back at Botha, he said: "Look here, I'm not a small boy. Don't think you're talking to a small boy. I'm not here as if you're my principal. . . . I

thought I was talking to a civilized person and there are courtesies involved."

The meeting then became a confused melee. Tutu accused Botha of lying when he told a newspaper the marchers had no petition. Well, said Botha, why didn't you bring it to my door? Did the president think, asked Tutu, that the archbishop had so much influence that he could lead responsible church leaders into a march without the petition? Botha replied, Did you tell them it was unlawful to march? Tutu said he had never marched in front of a red flag —he had not been present at the event to which Botha referred. He did not want sanctions, but he certainly wanted a new South Africa. And time and again he had said he did not support the ANC's armed struggle, but he did support their objective of a nonracial, democratic South Africa. Botha said, no, the ANC wanted a socialist dictatorship; moreover, blacks had a higher standard of living in South Africa than anywhere else on the continent. And had Tutu seen what the white Dutch Reformed Church—of which Botha was a member—had said? "Dat jy, Aartsbiskop Tutu, is op 'n heillose pad! Dit is wat hulle sê!" ("That you, Archbishop Tutu, are on a wicked path! That's what they say!") Botha asked Tutu to cite any instance when Jesus broke a law. Tutu cited a number of instances. Those were religious laws, said Botha. But that was the law that controlled society, came the rejoinder. Tutu's declaration of patriotism had one of Botha's ministers leaping to his president's defense. "I love this country," Tutu said, "I love it more than you do. Our people"—he meant black South Africans—"fought against the Nazis. You didn't!" Tutu accused Botha of supporting the Ossewa Brandwag (Ox Wagon Sentinels), an Afrikaner nationalist group that had opposed South Africa's entry into World War II. "It's not true," the minister protested. "This president, he destroyed the Ossewa Brandwag."

As accusation mounted on accusation, Tutu repeatedly told Botha, “I take exception to what you’re saying.” When he decided there was no point in continuing, he said, “Thank you,” and prepared to leave. Botha barked back: “You’re arrogant inside and outside my office. You can take your exceptions! Good-bye!” Driving back to Bishopscourt, Tutu told his chaplain: “We didn’t even shake hands.” Recounting the story later, he said ruefully that both he and Botha had behaved like little boys: “I don’t know whether that is how Jesus would have handled it. But at that moment I didn’t actually quite mind how Jesus would have handled it. I was going to handle it my way.” The following morning[17], Thursday, March 17, lawyers at the resumed court hearing for the Sharpeville Six in Pretoria found a judge transformed. He was accommodating and for the first time appeared sympathetic. That afternoon he granted a stay of execution. After months in the courts, the case went back to Botha later in the year, and he replaced the death sentences with long terms of imprisonment.

In the weeks following March 16[18], Botha conducted an acrimonious exchange of correspondence with Chikane and Tutu. Chikane laid the groundwork[19] for a national program of civil disobedience, launched in May under the banner “Standing for the Truth.” Early in June, Botha asked[20] the police minister, Vlok, to stay behind after a meeting of his State Security Council at Tuynhuys. What, Botha asked, were the police going to do to stop the Council of Churches? Vlok went away to consider the options. At a follow-up meeting, Botha told Vlok that the council’s headquarters, Khotso House (“House of Peace”), in Johannesburg, had become a “house of danger.” The police must “render it unusable.” How that was to be done was left up to Vlok.

Two months afterward, a police team[21], headed by a death squad officer who was subsequently dubbed “Prime Evil,” drove late one night to the Johannesburg city center (downtown Johannesburg). They broke into Khotso House

and stuffed eight backpacks, each carrying seven to ten kilograms (about fifteen to twenty-two pounds) of Soviet bloc military explosives, between the elevator shafts. They activated electronic time switches and left. By some miracle, the building's caretaker survived the ensuing blast virtually unscathed. But the occupants of a nearby apartment house were not as lucky: twenty-eight were injured, some seriously. Peter Storey, a Methodist leader who had taken part in the march on Parliament, was called out to help retirees living in apartments operated by his church across the street from Khotso House. "We were met by a scene out of hell[22]," he said later. "Dazed old people were wandering about in their nightdresses and pajamas, some whimpering, others in shock, many bleeding from lacerations. Miraculously, none had been seriously injured." As Tutu surveyed the wrecked building a few days later, he had cause to remember a warning from Botha on March 16: "You are leading people to confrontation[23]," Botha had said. "If you want confrontation, you're going to get confrontation. You must tell the people: they're going to get confrontation."

CHAPTER 1

CHILD OF MODERN SOUTH AFRICA

> “My father was a Xhosa and my mother a Motswana. What does that make me?”
>
> —Desmond Tutu, in the 1980s, ridiculing apartheid’s obsession with ethnicity.

> “A Zulu!”
>
> —Harry Belafonte, political activist, responding from the audience.

DESMOND TUTU’S BIRTHPLACE at Makoeteng in South Africa’s North West Province is easy to visit. A short walk from the busy shops and offices of Klerksdorp, a town founded by white settlers in the nineteenth century, it is a peaceful spot, flat but near a rocky koppie, or small hill, covered with bushes and trees where the children of the black township played. At the foot of the hill are the remains of a plantation of eucalyptus trees. Here, until Desmond was four[24], his older sister, Sylvia, collected fallen branches to make a fire at which they would warm themselves on cold winter mornings in the highveld. With the help of a resident, the visitor can trace the foundations of the house in which Desmond was born—the place where, according to African tradition, his umbilical cord was buried.

Seventy-five years after Tutu’s birth, however, there was nothing else to show that a black community had once lived at Makoeteng. Klerksdorp’s “location[25],” as whites called it, was too close to town for their comfort. In the decade after the formal policy of apartheid was adopted in 1948, after

the Tutus had left, its people were uprooted at gunpoint and moved six kilometers (four miles) away. In its place, the town council established a white suburb and named it Neserhof after a local family. In 2006, the area around the Tutu home was an open stretch of flat land, unused except for a strip of green grass where an entrepreneur had built a golf driving range. Large bungalows with well-cultivated gardens, on big plots of land, surrounded the empty space. Amid the trees below the hill was a golf course—golf having been long associated in South Africa with white privilege. The very name of Makoeteng[26], given to the area after the advent of democracy, reflected its destruction: in the language of the area, "makoeteng" describes the broken remnants of the mud-brick houses remaining after the location was razed.

Although the dispossession of black South Africans began with the arrival of the Dutch in the seventeenth century, for the Tutu family, its effects can be traced back to the British, and culminated between 1955 and 1980, when many places dear to the family—homes, schools, churches, and entire communities—were either wiped off the map or taken over by apartheid.

Desmond Mpilo Tutu was born on October 7, 1931. He was very much a child of modern South Africa, directly descended on both sides from the country's two largest language and cultural groupings. His mother, Aletta Dorothea Mavoertsek Mathlare, the strongest formative influence on his life, was a Motswana, from the Sotho-Tswana linguistic group. The chiefdoms of this group[27] have lived in the central and northwestern interior of South Africa for at least 800 years, by one estimate since AD 350, and are renowned for having built settlements accommodating thousands of people by the seventeenth century. Grandfather Mathlare once owned cattle near Fochville, between Klerksdorp and Johannesburg. His daughter was born and grew up in Boksburg, one of the mining towns

strung out across the Reef, the industrial conglomeration built over the gold-bearing reefs stretching east and west of Johannesburg. Her African name, Mavoertsek, might reflect the high infant mortality rate at the time she was born. It means “Get away!”—something one might say to a bothersome child or dog. She was letlomela[28], one born after the sibling before her had died. In African tradition, such a child would be named so as to diminish her importance, so the gods would not take her away also. No one ever called her by her full name; it was shortened to Matse, and her family called her Ausi (“big sister”) Matse.

In Boksburg, Matse Mathlare met and married Zachariah Zelilo Tutu, who was about four years her senior. Desmond speculated that his father’s second name, meaning weeping, may have been given to him because he too was letlomela. Zachariah was born[29] in 1901 in the town of Gcuwa in the eastern Cape, and was brought up in Qumbu, about 140 kilometers (90 miles) away. He was proud[30] to be a Xhosa-speaker, part of the Nguni group of peoples; and he was, in Desmond’s words, “quite arrogant. . . . He thought that Xhosas were God’s gift to the world. . . . He didn’t think the Batswana[fn1] were very smart. . . . I don’t know why he married my mother, because he thought that anyone who was not Xhosa was a lesser breed in many ways.” Once Matse was married, she spoke her husband’s mother tongue in their home. According to Desmond’s sister, Sylvia Morrison, “She didn’t say a word[31] in her language, even if she was very angry. . . . According to our custom, she was married to a Xhosa, and so she had to do everything in the Xhosa way. This was a Xhosa home.”

Zachariah was descended from a unique section of the Xhosa-speaking people known as amaMfengu. Some historians ascribe its existence as a group to the invasion of the British. The major groups[32] that trace their ancestry to a person named Xhosa—amaGcaleka and amaRharhabe, and other Xhosa-speakers such as amaMpondo or abeThembu

(the group to which Nelson Mandela belongs)—are cohesive sets of clans with common histories.[fn2] In contrast, amaMfengu originated as clusters of refugees of varied heritage who came together and became defined as a group only from the 1820s on. How the group was formed is part of a heated debate among South African historians over the tumultuous events of the southeastern seaboard and interior of South Africa during the early nineteenth century.

In the traditional version of the story, a ruthless and sadistic military innovator named Shaka led a revolution in northern Nguni society, using his hitherto minor Zulu chiefdom as the base from which to develop a powerful centralized kingdom stretching over large parts of what is now the province of kwaZulu-Natal.[fn3] By this account[33], Shaka unleashed a whirlwind, scattering defeated leaders in all directions. They in turn plundered other groups in a chain reaction, called the Mfecane, that spread mayhem across southern Africa. Among the refugees who fled south from kwaZulu into areas occupied by the Xhosa-speaking southern Nguni peoples were amaMfengu, Desmond Tutu's paternal ancestors. Their name was apparently derived from the IsiXhosa verb ukumfenguza, meaning "to wander about seeking service," and was thus a description of the group's status rather than its ethnic origin. Although amaMfengu were incorporated into Xhosa society, they were underdogs, discriminated against and exploited. In this telling of history, the British rescued the group, whom they called Fingoes, from the Xhosa overlords.

Since the 1960s, a far more nuanced picture has emerged. A number of historians[34] now argue that black societies did not generate the Mfecane on their own but were transformed by factors ranging from drought and the overcrowding of land to the depredations of colonial forces and the colonists' need for labor. Moreover, they suggest that although some amaMfengu were from dispersed chiefdoms in the north, the group actually incorporated

Xhosa-speaking refugees from chiefdoms attacked by British colonial forces as they invaded the eastern Cape from the west.

In this new narrative[35], amaMfengu included thousands of Gcaleka and Rharhabe women and children coerced into working on farms, others who saw no option but to seek work from the settlers to survive, groups who attached themselves to newly established Christian missions, and mercenaries employed by the British to counter Xhosa guerrilla tactics. Some historians now contend that the very concept of a “Fingo tribe” was an invention by settlers to hide from the Colonial Office in London the true identity of the Xhosa women and children they had abducted and illegally pressed into forced labor. Whatever their origins[36], a strong strand of opinion in Xhosa society regarded amaMfengu as collaborationists with the British, traitors to the Xhosa paramount chief to whom they owed allegiance. Phyllis Ntantala, the mother of South African cabinet minister Pallo Jordan, related that when her husband, A. C. Jordan, was being introduced to her relatives in the 1930s, they were impressed that he could claim Mpondomise citizenship, “thus showing[37] he was no collaborating Mfengu. Such things are still important in the world we come from.”

Certainly, at and beyond[38] the frontier with white settlers, Desmond Tutu’s paternal forebears lived farther from their roots than other groups, settling at mission stations, in “locations” alongside white towns, or on rural land from which the British had expelled defeated communities. They adapted themselves to the new order, converting to Christianity earlier and in greater numbers than other groups, setting up as traders and commercial farmers, and breaking with African tradition by adopting individual land ownership. They seized the opportunities for formal western education offered by missionaries, and as a result they were placed in a leading position when blacks in the Cape Colony

began to organize politically and to register to vote for the legislature in the late nineteenth century. John Tengo Jabavu, an Mfengu teacher who worked closely with Cape liberals, founded South Africa's first black-owned newspaper, *Imvo ZabaNtsundu* ("Black Opinion"), in 1884. He declared that it would[39] work for black unity and identified his audience as stretching across the subcontinent, from Table Bay (Cape Town) to Port Natal (Durban), from Pretoria (Tshwane) to Port Elizabeth.

In the twentieth century, amaMfengu gained a reputation as the educated elite of black society. When the modern South Africa was created in 1910—joining in a union two former British colonies, Natal and the Cape; and two former Afrikaner republics, Transvaal and the Orange Free State—Jabavu was in the delegation that traveled to London to try to persuade the British government not to ratify the constitution, because it denied the vote to most blacks. Fifteen years later, it was two Mfengu brothers who persuaded Nelson Mandela's father to send him to school. In his autobiography Mandela[40] described amaMfengu as "our clergymen, policeman, teachers, clerks and interpreters."

It is this view, rather than that of amaMfengu as collaborationists, that leaders of the democratic South Africa now promote. In the early 1990s, Desmond Tutu visited Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the modern-day political leader of the Zulu nationalism to which Shaka gave birth, in the kwaZulu capital of Ulundi. As Buthelezi proudly showed Tutu a statue of Shaka, he also expressed admiration for amaMfengu as the educators of black South Africans. Mandela, in an interview[41] with the present author, played down the characterization of amaMfengu as traitors, citing Thembu history: "When we were being attacked by the Gcalekas, the Thembus ran away. It was amaMfengu who defended Thembuland. . . . They were given an area after that, and the king said, 'Nobody should ever say that person's a Fingo. Any person who says so here will be

punished.' Now even today, in Thembuland, you can't say so-and-so is an Mfengu." Mandela also emphasized that among those jailed with him for life in 1964 were leaders with Mfengu antecedents such as Raymond Mhlaba and Govan Mbeki, father of his successor as president, Thabo Mbeki.

Tutu rarely discusses his ethnic roots. In general, South Africans do not refer simultaneously to their heritage and their nationality as, for instance, Irish- or Italian-Americans do. In particular, many black South Africans spent the latter half of the twentieth century shying away from talking about, or even disclosing, their origins to outsiders. This was because apologists for apartheid used ethnicity to justify white minority rule in South Africa. There was, they said, no such person as a black South African, and thus no black majority. The country had ten black "nations," none of them much bigger than the white "nation." Each of these ten was to be allowed to rule itself in its own "homeland." In the years of Tutu's campaigning against apartheid, he described his origins only to attack the policy of forcing citizenship in these homelands on black South Africans.

Nevertheless, Tutu was brought up to regard IsiXhosa as his mother tongue. After using its "click" sounds in blessings at the end of church services, he teases western audiences by saying that it is the "language of heaven." In the Xhosa tradition, the Tutus traced their descent through the male line—not through their surname, which means "ash," but rather through isiduko, praise names given to the founders of the clans of which they are part. There is no direct analogy[42] between the concept of a clan and an extended family in European culture; one historian has described a Xhosa clan as "a group of lineages who did not quite understand how they were related to each other, but who believed through their common clan name and clan praises that they shared a common ancestor." Nelson Mandela became widely, and affectionately, known in South Africa by

his clan name, Madiba. The Tutu family's principal clan name is Tshezi, but Desmond also traced his lineage in Xhosa society through other isiduko: Tshibase, Dlaba, and Umkhontombovu ("Red Spear").

Zachariah Tutu trained as a primary school teacher at Lovedale, the preeminent educational institution established by Scottish missionaries in the eastern Cape in the nineteenth century. Lovedale's graduates spread out through South Africa, staffing the church schools that educated the overwhelming majority of black pupils. Zachariah apparently took a post in Boksburg. He was better educated than Matse; she received only a primary school education, training in domestic science at Tiger Kloof, the center for Batswana education established by the London Missionary Society in the northern Cape.

In the late 1920s, Zachariah was offered a teaching post in Klerksdorp. Before whites arrived[43], the site of the town was on the eastern edge of the area of influence of Tau ("Lion"), a chief of the Tswana-speaking Barolong people. By some accounts[44], Tau's descendants had been dislodged from the region by Nguni groups during the Mfecane, but the stability and wealth of the Barolong town at nearby Thabeng impressed pioneer missionaries in the 1820s. The first whites to appropriate the land in the area were the descendants of Dutch, Huguenot, and German settlers who left the Cape Colony in the 1830s and trekked across what they named the Vaal ("ash-colored") River. The Voortrekkers—pioneers also known as boere, or farmers, and later as Afrikaners—founded Klerksdorp on a tributary of the Vaal named Schoonspruit ("Clear Stream"). The town took its name from a magistrate named le Clercq—descended from the same Huguenot settler as South Africa's last white president, F. W. de Klerk—and it was the first white settlement in what later became the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, also known as the Transvaal.

Desmond Tutu's birthplace was thus intimately associated with white rule north of the Vaal. Moreover, Tutu was born very near another site of significance for Afrikaner nationalism: a memorial to 149 adults and 968 children who died in a British concentration camp in Klerksdorp. The camp was established during the second of the Afrikaners' nineteenth-century wars of independence. In the first of these wars, the Transvaal defeated a British attempt to annex its territory in 1878. In the second, between 1899 and 1902, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State republics resisted British designs on the Transvaal's newly discovered gold fields. They lost, after a long-drawn-out war of attrition in which Boer guerrillas raided British regular troops, who in turn herded the guerrillas' families into camps to stop them from resupplying the fighters. The result was the death by disease of 6,000 Afrikaner women and 22,000 children. Black people were relegated to a marginal role in the war, serving mostly as noncombatants on both sides; but they too were swept up into camps, where 14,000 died. The deaths of black people went almost unnoticed by white public opinion—there was no memorial to black victims in Klerksdorp until 2000—but the deaths of Afrikaner civilians left a legacy of bitterness that scarred twentieth-century South Africa. In 1996, nearly a century after the second war, Tutu was to apply its lessons in the service of his postapartheid mission when he chaired the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Most of Klerkdorp's town histories from the apartheid era make only elliptical references to the indigenous people who lived there when the trekkers arrived, referring to "problems with the black population," "robberies" and "a threatened attack by blacks," the last of which was met by the raising of a commando to chase them off. The black residential area which later became known as Makoeteng was established in 1907, a short way downstream from the original white settlement, to house workers who served the settler

community. When Tutu was born, it was known simply as the "native location." Until well into the twentieth century, whites confined their definition of a native to a black South African; many whites, even if their families had been in Africa for generations, styled themselves Europeans.

In the 1930s, Klerksdorp's black residents[45] lived on plots that were big by the standards of townships established later. They built their own houses and kept cattle, sheep, and poultry. There was no sewerage system—sanitation workers collected buckets of night soil from outside homes and took them away in carts pulled by mules or donkeys. Only whites were enrolled[46] as voters in elections for the seven-man town council. Issues affecting black residents were brought to the council by the Native Location Advisory Board. Black people were rarely named individually in council minutes; exceptionally, one minute of the time records that "Native L. Maloi" applied for the refund of the proceeds of the sale of his heifer by the town pound. Municipal wages for white laborers were four or five shillings a week, as against two shillings sixpence for black laborers. In 1933, when Tutu was two, a delegation from the Joint Council of Whites and Natives told the town's public health committee that the black community was suffering greatly as a result of unemployment; the delegation successfully asked the committee to approve a plan to allocate a piece of land for 100 vegetable plots for black residents—on the condition that they would not compete with white growers by selling their produce in the town market.

The community was diverse[47], mostly Tswana-speaking but including Sotho- and Xhosa-speakers and a few Indian traders. Children swam in the river and played and picked berries on the slopes of the nearby koppie. There was an African Methodist Episcopal church as well as a Dutch Reformed church, but the biggest churches were the Anglican and Methodist. Zachariah Tutu was principal of the Methodist primary school. As in other black communities