

DESMOND TUTU

Archbishop Desmond Tutu was born in South Africa and lived under what was called the apartheid system. This system separated whites from blacks and gave white people more rights even though the majority of people living in South Africa were black.

In 1975, despite the apartheid system in South Africa, the Anglican Church appointed Desmond Tutu as the Dean of Johannesburg. He later went on to become Archbishop. Tutu always spoke out against apartheid as he believed that everyone was equal in God's eyes. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985 as, despite his opposition to apartheid, he always promoted peaceful, non-violent protest.

In 1989 F W de Klerk became President of South Africa. He was more open to change and Archbishop Tutu encouraged him to take risks to reform the system of apartheid and treat black and whites equally. The leader of the once banned African National Congress, Nelson Mandela, was released from prison and very quickly things began to change in South Africa. During the next elections black people were able to vote and Nelson Mandela became President.

Desmond Tutu was chosen by President Mandela to chair South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and investigate the crimes committed by all sides during the apartheid regime. The Commission lasted for two years and, as head of the commission, Archbishop Tutu listened to a number of stories about the events that had happened under the apartheid system. People had treated each other very badly and Tutu talked about being appalled by the evil that he heard. The purpose of the commission was to help people come to terms with what had happened and begin to heal the divisions in society. He understood that this process would take a long time and that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was only the beginning.

