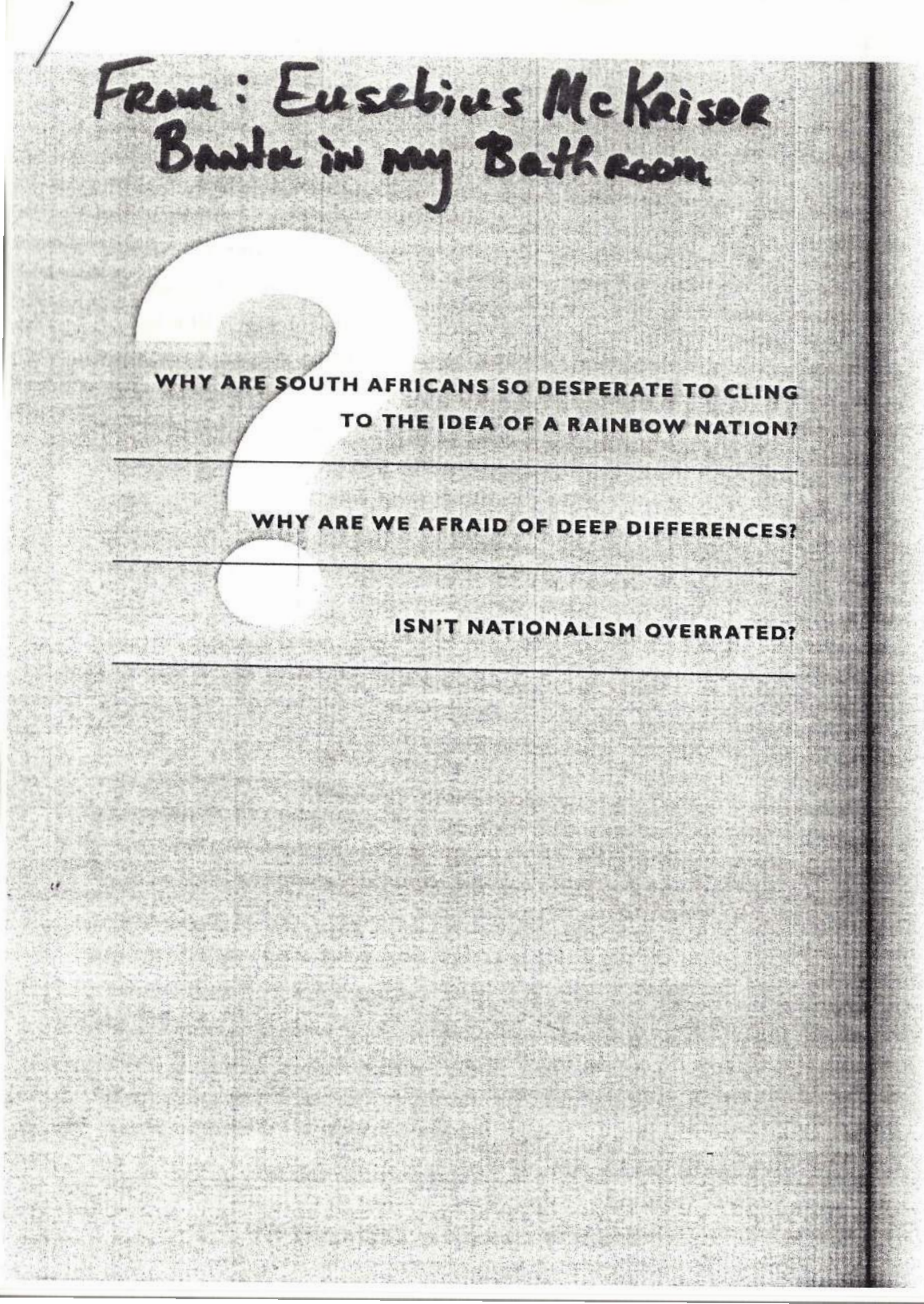


A DIVIDED NATION

I sometimes feel very sorry for us. We have an almost pathological yearning as South Africans to be Archbishop Desmond Tutu's (in)famous rainbow nation, the image that propelled us into the new South Africa. Since then, it has by and large been left up to big sporting events to sustain the rainbow nation lie – the Rugby World Cup of 1995 is still the most nostalgia inducing of the lot, followed a close second by our successful hosting of the 2010 Soccer World Cup. There's nothing like sporting madness to make us feel united. You'd have to be a real party-pooper not to get a knot in your throat at the sight of white Afrikaans Blue Bulls supporters on beer crates in Soweto.

Well, optical illusions will get us nowhere. True unity – whatever it amounts to – must be grounded, firmly, in reality. So allow me to burst the bubble: South Africa is a divided nation.

We are spatially, linguistically, culturally and ideologically divided. And it is best we come to grips with this reality sooner rather than later.

THE SPATIAL DIVIDES

It fascinates me that so many of us resist my viewpoint that we are divided when we can't even live together. In the title essay of this collection ('A Bantu in my bathroom!'), I told the story of an elderly white lady who could not imagine living in the same house as a black person. That was one example of a much bigger spatial apartheid story we are still in the grips of. My hometown, Grahamstown, is a perfect example. It is such a small city and yet you could easily live your entire life there having very little contact with people different from yourself. The only multiracial, multiclass near-contact point is the city centre where everyone does their shopping. Beyond that very small part of the city, there is a huge spatial divide between the different communities of the City of Saints.

My high school, Graeme College Boys' High, for example, is situated in what was an affluent white suburb. (It is still affluent, but less white now.) I landed up in this school only because the nun running my primary school had insisted my parents 'sacrifice' every penny to make sure my academic potential was not wasted on the weak, local coloured high school. Travelling to school every day felt like being bused from one country to another, from the poor, Afrikaans-speaking coloured township to the wealthy, English-speaking white suburb. The city was planned in accordance with the demands of the Group Areas Act of 1950. Blacks, coloureds, whites and Indians were geographically separated. This is still the case for the most part.

In standard seven, our geography teacher, Mr Freeman, walked us to a little koppie just above the school where we could see the town's contours very clearly. A dry little stream in the horizon separated the coloured township from the black township. That was the buffer that was mandated by the apartheid city planners. Grahamstown residents don't live in each other's spaces. They

live *around* each other. And the rest of the country is no different. We are geographically, spatially, divided as a nation.

My family still lives in the coloured neighbourhood. My two sisters have teenage children, Rolando and Regine. Rolando and Regine have only coloured friends. They attend the local school in the community, Mary Waters High School, which is overwhelmingly attended by only coloured children. Rolando and Regine, although teenagers, have never had proper social contact with children of other race, language or class backgrounds. And the children and families in the neighbourhood where they are growing up, look and sound like them, listen to the same music as them, enjoy the same kinds of cuisine, watch the same soap operas, and date and marry each other.

They live in a homogenous poor, coloured, Afrikaans, conservative, Christian bubble.

My siblings and nephews and nieces are not the exception to some grand, national integration success story. They are living the lives of the majority of South Africans. We live apart from each other. There is a very small number of South Africans who defy these spatial patterns, and even these 'exceptions' are misunderstood.

Often, for example, townhouse complexes in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg are glorified as exemplars of what can happen when people see beyond race and learn to live in each other's space.

But of course this is disingenuous. You can live in the same neighbourhood as people who look and sound different from yourself and still be divided. Just the other day, for example, I was taking a stroll around my fenced-in complex. A white lady stepped outside of her flat and walked in my direction. She spotted me and looked like she knew she had just met her rapist

or murderer. The fear was palpable. She scurried back inside like a nervous rat. I was furious, deeply furious at the assumption that a burly black man must be dangerous until proven otherwise. A few minutes later she emerged behind her security gate and nervously asked, 'Do you live here?'

'No, I am from the moon, and you?' I snapped back and walked off. That kind of experience is not unfamiliar and shatters the myth that pockets of integration are happening and are leading to social cohesion in 'the suburbs'.

I have been guilty of similarly anti-social behaviour. At the first complex where I had lived, I stayed next to an Indian couple for more than a year. The entrance to their front door was less than a ruler's distance from mine. We always smiled at each other. Sometimes I saw them at the gym, and the smile festival continued. Sometimes the wonderful aroma of curries would flow in through my front door and I knew that if this was in the township I would have been able to walk next door and get my plate! But I was left 'respecting their space' since that seemed to be the unspoken mores around there. One day I heard a baby crying – I realised the couple had had their first baby. Every single member of the extended families arrived over the weekend. Did I dare to congratulate them on their bundle of joy? No. And I am supposed to be a first generation coconut, the product of multicultural schooling.

These are the hard facts about us. We live in different neighbourhoods, and those of us who live in the same neighbourhood often fake integration to mask deeper divisions in our lived realities, and in our personal identities. You get along with the guy at the office whose name has a click in it, so you cannot possibly be said to be uncomfortable with people of another racial, cultural or linguistic background, right? Such is the complexity of our self-deception.

But spatial apartheid, and nifty avoidance techniques, tell a different story. I still don't know the names of the Indian couple who smiled at me for a year.

THE LINGUISTIC – AND CULTURAL – DIVIDES

In addition to our spatial divisions we are also linguistically divided. I speak English and Afrikaans fluently. Despite being from the Eastern Cape, and having a Xhosa stepmother, I did not bother learning Xhosa. Being the good liberal that I am, I did take a non-mother tongue Xhosa course during my undergraduate years at Rhodes University, but I am simply not fluent. My little brother, who has a Xhosa heritage, is fully trilingual. He speaks English, Afrikaans and Xhosa very well, and code switches within these languages more fluently than I can. For example, he speaks a very different kind of English – more grammatically correct stuff – with me than he does with his coloured friends who tend to translate very directly from Afrikaans – 'Daddy did take me to the beach!' rather than 'Daddy took me to the beach!' The fact that he speaks 'properly' when he chats with me is an indication of the fact that he consciously switches between dialects. He chooses to use certain slang words, and certain localised rules of speech, when speaking to his friends that don't apply to our communication.

This is also an example of how language is about more than mere communication. Language is also about identity. My little brother loves rap, especially the music of coloured rappers from coloured townships in Port Elizabeth and the Cape Flats. These rappers rap in English but in the kind of dialect and slang that he uses when he communicates with his friends. And they rap about their own lived realities, which are different from mine, and with which I cannot really identity, even though I am coloured too.

There are a few important lessons here. Languages both facilitate communication and constitute part of our identities. But the consequence of this fact is that if we do not speak each other's languages then we are not bridging cultural divides between ourselves. This is quite apart from not being able to communicate effectively with each other.

A large number of South Africans are admirably multilingual. But they tend to be mostly black Africans. Most white, Indian and coloured South Africans are either monolingual or bilingual, mostly speaking English and Afrikaans. One consequence of this is that the linguistic divides in the country inadvertently also reinforce racial, class and cultural divides. If I cannot speak Xhosa, it is more difficult for me to successfully challenge explicit and latent prejudices I might have towards Xhosa people.

While many black Africans are fluent in English and Afrikaans too, that simply reinforces the fact that one can be – as political analyst Aubrey Matshiqi often puts it – in the numerical majority but still be in the cultural minority. Put simply, black Africans come to the language party more often than their white, Indian and coloured counterparts. That, too, reinforces rather than narrows distances between us because it is a reminder of the social hierarchy of languages in our society: English and Afrikaans, stemming from our racist past, were always deemed more important than indigenous African languages.

To point out, as many often do at this point, that English is necessary as a common medium of communication, and the international language of commerce, is to miss the point. If your gardener with fewer educational opportunities than you can speak fluently to you in English, and go back home and speak five languages, why are you too arrogant to challenge yourself for being monolingual?

The linguistic divide, for the reason I just explained, inevitably coincides with racial divisions in our country. That's to be expected. But it is also not quite that neat. The linguistic divisions between my little brother and me are real, and yet it is not a black and white affair. If I don't bother making sense of his dialect of English and Afrikaans, then I rob myself of an opportunity of getting to know him better, to get inside his headspace.

I actually got him to download some of his favourite rap onto my iPod and there is little doubt that dancing to his tunes helped to close the linguistic – and therefore cultural – divide between us as brothers. In the absence of that kind of effort, linguistic divisions are powerful obstacles to learning to live with each other and not just around each other. For the most part, however, we do not, as a country, make sufficient effort to close the linguistic divisions that exist in the country. Shockingly, for example, it remains a (controversial) education policy pipedream whether or not it should be compulsory for learners to be taught at least one African language in schools. This should be a no-brainer. But it isn't, precisely because the nature and consequences of the linguistic divide are so poorly understood by many of us.

THE IDEOLOGICAL DIVIDES

One of the clearest examples of our ideological division as South Africans are different attitudes towards our constitution. I absolutely love our constitution. I think it is an incredibly progressive document that takes freedom seriously. It is a vision of the kind of society we are trying to build in our post-democracy, a society in which the rights of individuals and communities are respected and protected from a tyranny of the majority.

From a philosophical perspective, however, the constitution is a profoundly liberal document, one that at its core is based on

liberal individualism. Of course it is true that there are clauses that refer to communities and society at large, but in the evolving jurisprudence that has come out of the Constitutional Court since 1996, it has mostly been the freedom of individuals and minorities – including, to be precise, the *individual* members of majority groups – that has come out tops in key cases, especially ones centred on social policy or lifestyle issues. It is in part with the help of the normative vision of this profoundly liberal document that I have, in recent times, fiercely defended artist Brett Murray's right to offend President Jacob Zuma. (I air the specific issues around that event more fully in 'The People versus Brett Murray'.)

But liberals live in a bubble. In that bubble we celebrate the constitution but we refuse to deal with the reality that it is a profoundly contested document, a contestation that doesn't get much airplay only because the conservatives do not have access to public platforms, including the mainstream media, and many simply do not have the ability to make a case for their own ideological sidelining. And so, for example, I had to face a question in the middle of a symposium about artistic freedom from an audience member listening to my soliloquy about liberalism, 'Eusebius, do you think the constitution reflects the views of the majority?'

I think he was hoping to expose me for being hopelessly in love with our jurisprudence. He knew the answer to his own question. So I called his bluff, since I have always been comfortable with the realities about our constitutional dispensation. 'No. And you know the answer to that question anyway. The constitution is a profoundly liberal document. And most South Africans are deeply conservative. If we had referenda, most South Africans would probably allow the spanking of kids in our schools, do away with gay marriage, bring back the death penalty, and perhaps even reconsider abortion rights!'

We are scared of acknowledging this ideological divide. I suppose one reason for not talking about it is the fear that there is no way of settling moral and ideological differences, so why chat about it at all? It is better to simply hope that it will all disappear. The other reason is that liberals fear they might lose the debate, at least numerically, but they – we – are so convinced by the correctness of our worldview that we would rather find ways of 'educating' the majority of South Africans, to rid them of their ideological waywardness, than to risk our precious liberal constitutional edifice being challenged or, worse, reviewed and changed.

None of this conflict avoidance, however, changes the reality: we are an ideologically divided bunch.

SO WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH OUR DIVISIONS?

If we are spatially, linguistically and ideologically divided – quite apart from our political divisions which are less in need of exposition – then it raises the question of why we are so desperate, as I discussed at the outset, to cling on to the idea of a united nation in which we all get along?

One reason we cling to motifs of 'oneness' is because we are scared that deep disagreement will perpetuate historical divisions. This, sadly, does not help to build a robust new society. It simply leads to fake unity that threatens to collapse when pressure is brought to bear on it, such as during the weeks of debate around 'The Spear' painting. We should, in fact, strive to build a democracy in which deep disagreement is possible.

I was struck by this fear of disagreement recently. At a public seminar hosted by Wits University, I accused liberals of not always standing up for what they believe in (especially in the face of

black anger). An older, white member of the audience took issue with me during the discussion session. 'I want to challenge what Eusebius said about liberals. First, the only black person I am scared of is my wife!' (You have to love the liberal – nonchalantly prefacing such a question with the insistence that he must be progressive on account of an interracial marriage. Give the man a Bell's for effort!)

'I am also, might I add, friends with Advocate Malindi and felt for him when he broke down.' Advocate Malindi, of course, is the advocate who burst into tears during the urgent interdict application in court seeking to bar the Brett Murray painting of Zuma from being further exhibited.

'We have to understand the raw racial wounds we are still nursing!' the gentleman pleaded. He got some applause for sincerity, and no doubt sincere *agreement* from many in the audience.

But, as I pointed out to him, I am not callous enough to say we should not try to walk a mile in each other's shoes. Of course we should, and we will better live together in this fractured country of ours if we did that.

'The true test of our democratic maturation is not whether we can have many more "Kumbaya" moments but whether we can disagree deeply!'

Why should I pretend, for example, that I don't have deep ideological disagreements with conservative South Africans? We can laugh over a beer without talking about these, but the inevitable public policy moments will come along later and expose this pseudo-agreement. The goal, difficult to achieve in practice, must be to disagree deeply and still be able to share a beer (or a beer crate in Soweto).

The sooner we abandon the myth of a rainbow nation, a united nation, the better for our democracy. A national identity is neither necessary nor possible: we live in a diverse country with individuals and communities that have profoundly different beliefs, attitudes, habits and ideological convictions. Why insist on a common national identity? The fruitless search for a common national identity is not admirable. It is merely a symptom of a child so bruised and battered by her past that she wants to live in a future that is filled only with jingles. That is understandable, but the wrong goal. We should instead accept that we are deeply divided – spatially, linguistically, culturally, ideologically – and reflect on how we might live in each other's space while disagreeing deeply with each other. The alternative, fake national unity, is simply childish.

The Freedom Charter, 1955

Comment : **The Freedom Charter is a unique document in that for the first time ever, the people were actively involved in formulating their own vision of an alternative society. The existing order of State oppression and exploitation which was prevalent in the 1950's (and earlier) was totally rejected.**

The notion of a Charter was first mooted at the annual Congress of the African National Congress in August 1953. Prof Z K Mathews formally suggested convening a Congress of the People (C.O.P.) to draw up the Freedom Charter. The idea was adopted by the allies of the ANC, the South African Indian Congress, the South African Coloured People's Organisation and the South African Congress of Democrats.

The Congress of the People was not a single event but a series of campaigns and rallies, huge and small, held in houses, flats, factories, kraals, on farms and in the open. The National Action Council enlisted volunteers to publicise the C.O.P, educate the people, note their grievances and embark on a "million signatures campaign".

Thus when the people met on the 25th and 26th June 1955, the Congress of the People that was convened in Kliptown, near Johannesburg, represented a crucial historical moment in establishing a new order based on the will of the people. It brought together 2,844 delegates from all over the country. The Freedom Charter proclaims that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it" and that "all shall be equal before the law". It pledged to continue the struggle until a new democratic order was put into place.

Hence, the Charter is a significant document because it embodies the hopes and aspirations of the black people.

The Charter was subsequently endorsed by the C.O.P.

Crowd at Congress of the People (1955) to adopt Charter

We, The people of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know:

that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of the People;

that our people have been robbed of their birthright to land, liberty and peace by a form of government founded on injustice and inequality;

that our country will never be prosperous or free until all our people live in brotherhood, enjoying equal rights and opportunities;

that only a democratic state, based on the will of all the people, can secure to all their birthright without distinction of colour, race, sex or belief;

And *Therefore* we, the People of South Africa, black and white together - equals, countrymen and brothers - adopt this Freedom Charter. And we pledge ourselves to strive together, sparing neither strength nor courage, until the democratic changes here set out have been won.

THE PEOPLE SHALL GOVERN!

Every man and woman shall have the right to vote for and to stand as a candidate for all bodies which make laws;

All people shall be entitled to take part in the administration of the country;

The rights of the people shall be the same, regardless of race, colour or sex;

All bodies of minority rule, advisory boards, councils and authorities, shall be replaced by democratic organs of self-government.

ALL NATIONAL GROUPS SHALL HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS!

There shall be equal status in the bodies of the state, in the courts and in the schools for all national groups and races;

All people shall have equal right to use their own languages and to develop their own folk culture and customs;

All national groups shall be protected by law against insults to their race and national pride;

The preaching and practice of national, race or colour discrimination and contempt shall be a punishable crime;

All apartheid laws and practices shall be set aside.

THE PEOPLE SHALL SHARE IN THE COUNTRY'S WEALTH!

The national wealth of our country, the heritage of all South Africans, shall be restored to the people;

The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and the monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole;

All other industry and trade shall be controlled to assist the well-being of the people;
All people shall have equal rights to trade where they choose, to manufacture and to enter all trades, crafts and professions.

THE LAND SHALL BE SHARED AMONG THOSE WHO WORK IT!

Restriction of land ownership on a racial basis shall be ended, and all the land re-divided amongst those who work it, to banish famine and land hunger;
The state shall help the peasants with implements, seed, tractors and dams to save the soil and assist the tillers;

Freedom of movement shall be guaranteed to all who work on the land;
All shall have the right to occupy land wherever they choose;

People shall not be robbed of their cattle, and forced labour and farm prisons shall be abolished.

ALL SHALL BE EQUAL BEFORE THE LAW!

No one shall be imprisoned, deported or restricted without a fair trial;
No one shall be condemned by the order of any government official;
The courts shall be representative of all the people;

Imprisonment shall be only for serious crimes against the people, and shall aim at re-education, not vengeance;

The police force and army shall be open to all on an equal basis and shall be the helpers and protectors of the people;
All laws which discriminate on grounds of race, colour or belief shall be repealed.

ALL SHALL ENJOY EQUAL HUMAN RIGHTS!

The law shall guarantee to all their right to speak, to organise, to meet together, to publish, to preach, to worship, and to educate their children;
The privacy of the house from police raids shall be protected by law;

All shall be free to travel without restriction from countryside to towns, from province to province, and from South Africa abroad;

Pass laws, permits and all other laws restricting these freedoms shall be abolished.

THERE SHALL BE WORK AND SECURITY!

All who work shall be free to form trade unions, to elect their officers and to make wage agreements with their employers;

The state shall recognise the right and duty of all to work, and to draw full unemployment benefits;
Men and women of all races shall receive equal pay for equal work;

There shall be a forty-hour working-week, a national minimum wage, paid annual leave, and sick leave for all workers, and maternity leave on full pay for all working mothers;
Miners, domestic workers, farm workers and civil servants shall have the same rights as all others who work;
Child labour, compound labour, the tot system and contract labour shall be abolished.

THE DOORS OF LEARNING AND OF CULTURE SHALL BE OPENED!

The government shall discover, develop and encourage national talent for the enhancement of our cultural life;
All the cultural treasures of mankind shall be open to all, by free exchange of books, ideas and contact with other lands;

The aim of education shall be to teach the youth to love their people and their culture, to honour human brotherhood, liberty and peace;
Education shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children;
Higher education and technical training shall be opened to all by means of state allowances and scholarships awarded on the basis of merit;
Adult illiteracy shall be ended by a mass state educational plan;
Teachers shall have all the rights of other citizens;
The colour bar in cultural life, in sport and in education shall be abolished.

THERE SHALL BE HOUSES, SECURITY AND COMFORT!

All people shall have the right to live where they choose, to be decently housed and to bring up their families in comfort and security;
Unused housing space shall be made available to the people;
Rent and prices shall be lowered, food plentiful and no one shall go hungry;
A preventive health scheme shall be run by the state;
Free medical care and hospitalisation shall be provided for all, with special care for mothers and young children;
Slums shall be demolished, and new suburbs built where all have transport, roads, lighting, playing fields, creches and social centres;
The aged, the orphans, the disabled and the sick shall be cared for by the state;
Rest, leisure and recreation shall be the right of all;
Fenced locations and ghettoes shall be abolished and laws which break up families shall be repealed.

THERE SHALL BE PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP!

South Africa shall be a fully independent state, which respects the rights and sovereignty of all nations;
South Africa shall strive to maintain world peace and the settlement of all international disputes by negotiation - not war;
Peace and friendship amongst all our people shall be secured by upholding equal rights, opportunities and status for all;
The people of the protectorates- Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland shall be free to decide for themselves their own future;
The right of the peoples of Africa to independence and self-government shall be recognised and shall be the basis of close co-operation.

Let all who love their people and their country now say, as we say here:

'THESE FREEDOMS WE WILL FIGHT FOR, SIDE BY SIDE, THROUGHOUT OUR LIVES, UNTIL WE HAVE WON OUR LIBERTY.'

Adopted at the Congress of the People at Kliptown, Johannesburg, on 25th and 26th June , 1955.

like Mac Maharaj and Eddie Daniels he considered daring escape plans, and occasionally these went further than mere hypothesis. When one of the warders left a key lying around, Jeff Masemola made a soap imprint and fashioned a duplicate key, which would have given them access to sections of the prison not normally open to them, but they never used it. In 1974, Mandela, Maharaj and Wilton Mkwayi planned to escape during a trip to the dentist in Cape Town, but abandoned the idea at the last minute when they suspected that they were being led into a trap set by the police. The most ambitious plan was a proposal made by Eddie Daniels to the ANC leaders in Lusaka that a helicopter, painted in the livery of the South African Defence Force, should pick Mandela up on the island and drop him on the roof of a sympathetic foreign embassy in Cape Town, from where he could apply for asylum. They never received a reply from Lusaka.

If Winnie found it a burden to be the emotional keystone of South Africa's liberator-in-chief, she never said as much, and never complained. She was the one person with whom Madiba shared his inner fears and feelings, and his letters to her were the only record of his deep anxieties and longing, his every dream and aspiration. He had told her in 1964 that he would rely on her support to sustain him in prison, and more than a decade later, that still held true. In February 1976 he wrote that he thought of her as sister, mother, friend and mentor, and pictured in his mind everything that made her the person she was, physically and spiritually. He recalled that she had lovingly accepted the numerous difficulties of life with him, which would have defeated another woman; told her he carefully dusted her photograph every morning, for it gave him the feeling that he was caressing her as he had in the old days; reminded her of their special intimate habit of rubbing their noses together, and said he touched his nose to hers on the photograph to 'recapture the electric current' that used to flush through his blood. 'I wonder,' he wrote, 'what it'll be like when I return.'

While their leaders were reminiscing about their lost lives and hankering for freedom, foremost in the minds of angry young blacks were their grievances against the Bantu Education Act, which, two decades after its introduction, was still a bone of contention. The system was widely despised and condemned, especially by young urban blacks whose parents had known the benefit of a superior education and had escaped what was indisputably schooling for servitude. Conversely, the youth had greater access to the media than their mothers and fathers had enjoyed, recognised the limitations of the education system imposed on them and became ever more determined to change it. Practically all Soweto's children seemed aware of the statement by the late Dr Verwoerd that except as labourers, there was no place for blacks in the white community. While white children were being taught mathematics and science, biology, German and Latin, black children were forced to learn arithmetic, agriculture (to prepare them for working on white farms),

Bible study, African languages (which would not equip them for university study) and Afrikaans. Their anger was fuelled by the introduction of a regulation that made it compulsory for certain subjects to be taught in Afrikaans rather than English. Apart from the fact that this would further limit their development, Afrikaans was deeply resented as the language of the oppressor.

As always, there were a number of children living at Winnie's home, and she was aware of the growing anger. After her ban expired in 1975, she warned in public speeches and media interviews that the rage felt by young blacks could lead to disaster, and appealed to the authorities to heed the protests of the children. Other prominent Sowetans also sounded the alert that a dangerous and potentially explosive situation was brewing. Desmond Tutu, then Anglican Dean of Johannesburg, wrote to Prime Minister John Vorster that he feared bloodshed and violence were almost inevitable. But the repeated caveats and appeals to drop Afrikaans as a language of tuition in black schools were ignored.

Frustration turned to action, and in dozens of schools, children as young as eight began boycotting classes in protest. Anxious parents, who felt that an inferior education was better than no education at all, were seen by their children as having capitulated, and large numbers of them, not knowing how to deal with the animosity of the young, turned to Winnie for advice.

Problems with the education authorities also brought parents to Winnie's door in search of help. When a group of children on a school trip to Swaziland died in a bus accident, the authorities refused to offer any financial help or compensation, even though the pupils had been in their care at the time. The parents struggled to raise the money to bring their children's bodies home, but several days after handing the funds over, they were told that the money had disappeared, and they could still not bury their offspring. After exhausting every other avenue, they turned to Winnie.

Over this period, she was inundated with requests and appeals for assistance, and realised that an organisation was needed to assist parents with their numerous and varied complaints, and look after the children's interests. She approached several of her influential friends, and in May 1976 the Soweto Parents' Association was launched. The chairman was Dr Aaron Mathlare, a former ANC activist, and both Winnie and Dr Nthatho Motlana served on the executive. The authorities clearly disapproved of the organisation, and whenever Winnie addressed a parents' meeting, the security police were conspicuously present and taking notes.

The spark that lit the 1976 student uprising was an incident at Naledi High School. During school hours, two security policemen arrived to arrest one of the student leaders, Enos Ngutshana. The headmaster asked the policemen to leave the premises and wait until the end of the school day to detain him, but they refused. When they tried to carry out the arrest, however, enraged pupils set the

police car alight and beat up the two officers. Soon afterwards, under the banner of the Soweto Students' Representative Council (SSRC), the students organised a mass demonstration against the use of Afrikaans in the classrooms. The organisers emphasised that this was to be a peaceful protest, and those taking part were instructed to wear their school uniforms and gather at their schools. The children threw themselves into preparations with an efficiency that would stun the entire country. They made placards with slogans that slammed education in Afrikaans, and worked out precise routes for pupils to follow from each school to the mass protest venue. Conscious that police might intervene, the student leaders asked the principals of primary schools to declare a holiday for younger pupils. However, the smaller children had no intention of being sidelined, and arrived in force, albeit uninvited, to join the march.

On the morning of 16 June, thousands of children took to the streets of Soweto carrying banners, singing freedom songs and clenching their fists in the familiar black power salute. No one, least of all the organisers, could have foreseen that what started out as a youthful protest against being forced to learn in what amounted to a foreign language would set first Soweto, then the whole of South Africa alight, and launch a revolution that would change the face of the country forever.

Like most adults in Soweto, Winnie knew about the planned march, but had no reason to doubt the students' assurances that it would be peaceful. She later made the point that if parents had had the slightest idea that there might be any trouble, they would not have gone to work that day.

When she herself left for the office that morning, she hardly spared a thought for the student march, and was following her normal routine when she received a telephone call from a mother in Soweto, who screamed hysterically: 'Please come, the police are shooting our children!'

Winnie drove back to Orlando West as fast as she could. Word of the situation spread even faster, and thousands of black adults left their workplaces all over Johannesburg and rushed home, using whatever form of transport they could find. Railway stations, taxi ranks and bus stops were swamped with commuters, and people with cars stopped and picked up as many passengers as they could. It seemed as though all roads led to Soweto.

Dr Motlana was one of the few adult eyewitnesses to the early events on that fateful day. Between 7 am and 8 am, he noticed a constant parade of schoolchildren passing his house in Dube, and followed them. At the Orlando West school the police tried to stop them from going any further, but the children kept on marching. Suddenly, the police opened fire – but instead of achieving the desired, tried and tested result of halting the march and dispersing the protestors, the shots ignited bedlam. What followed was a crazed anger and trail of violence and destruction that took everyone, including the police, by surprise. In the blink of an eye, Soweto became a bloody battlefield, with children trying to shield themselves from police bullets with dustbin lids, and police using live ammunition in preference to more common anti-riot measures such as dogs, tear gas and baton charges.

For Winnie, the images of 16 June could never be erased. As she drove through Orlando, a sea of young black faces met her. Hector Petersen, the thirteen-year-old boy who was the first to die, had just been killed. She was in agony at the sight of dying children whose bodies were torn apart by bullets.

Dr Motlana saw police on the back of a truck shooting at a group of children, all around six years of age, playing by the roadside. He rushed to the police station and demanded to see the commanding officer, asking what the hell the police thought they were doing, shooting at small children. The brigadier's reply was both crude and abusive.

Motlana worked tirelessly all day, removing bullets and shrapnel from wounded children, cleaning and suturing gaping wounds. The victims were too scared to call for ambulances or go to Baragwanath Hospital lest they be arrested, so their parents and friends carried them to Motlana's surgery. The scenes played out there were duplicated in doctors' rooms all over Soweto.

Winnie's heart was in her throat as she saw the crowd of children move to the main road, and she watched, aghast and helpless, while they unleashed their pent-up rage on the police and anyone else who crossed their path. Some estimates put the number of children involved in the 16 June protest at 30 000, but whatever their number, nothing and no one could stop the rampage.

Stones rained down in showers, like giant-sized hail. Cars were smashed and property was set on fire. Children as young as eleven hijacked buses, teenagers dragged drivers out of government cars. They smashed and burned everything in sight. The noise was deafening, and no one could get close enough to even try to reason with the crowd. An elderly man in a van tried to drive past to deliver his goods, but was ordered to stop and get out of the vehicle. Seeing children in school uniforms, and clearly unaware of how grave the situation was, he ignored them. Winnie watched in helpless horror as the children started throwing bricks through his windscreen. One of the bricks hit him on the head and he flung himself out of the van. As he fell on his back in the road, he lifted his arm and shouted 'Amandla!' before he was pelted with stones, and died. In years to come, whenever Winnie recalled the terror of 16 June, it was the face of that man she remembered, and it always brought tears to her eyes.

The situation rapidly spiralled out of control. Winnie was horrified when she saw the police pulling a white body from a dustbin while children looked on and sang freedom songs. The volcano of blind anger and hatred that exploded in Soweto in 1976 was no different from that of the French or Russian revolution, Tiananmen Square, the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya and countless other violent confrontations.

Nothing could stop the red-hot spewing lava until the anger was vented. The children of Soweto had planned a demonstration, not a street war, but the ill-considered response by the police was all that was needed to turn the protest into a powder keg.

Before 16 June, black parents were inclined to oppose any action that interfered with their children's schooling. After that date, although the pupils' militant reaction filled them with apprehension, parents were united in their condemnation of police brutality. In a single day, control had passed into the hands of the children, and parents found themselves powerless to stop the madness. The children called for boycotts against certain stores, and if adults were found with shopping bags from those shops, the contents were confiscated and destroyed. The children called for strike action, and the adults had to comply or face merciless reprisals. The parents became the pawns with which the children challenged apartheid. If the adults did not go to work, or stopped buying from stores owned by whites, the economy would suffer. It was a powerful weapon, and the children were wielding it.

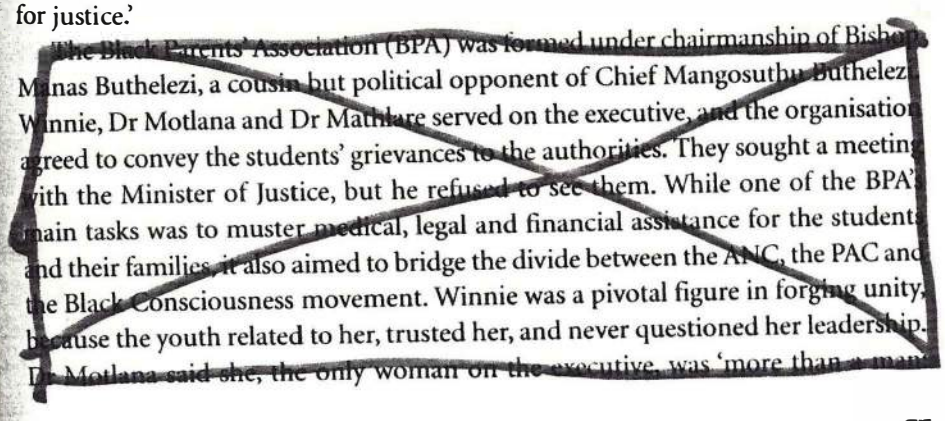
Only a small section of Soweto had electricity, and at night the sprawling township was usually plunged into darkness. But in the weeks following the riots, the flames of youthful rage lit up the sky. Dozens of government buildings, many of them schools, were burned to the ground. Shops, post offices, houses and hundreds of vehicles were set on fire. Beerhalls and bottle stores were razed to punish those who lured fathers into squandering their wages on liquor and prevent the proceeds from financing the hated Bantu Administration Board. Shebeens, too, were targeted, and rivers of alcohol flowed down Soweto's streets and alleyways. Winnie's old friend, shebeen king Elija Msibi, found himself in an unusual situation. Thinking that a man of his wealth would automatically oppose the revolution, or at least the wanton destruction of property and livelihood, the police asked him to become an informer. But Elija's sympathy lay with the youth, and he consulted the ANC leadership on how he should proceed. They told him to play along, using his illiteracy and inability to speak English as excuses if the police grew impatient with the quality of information he fed them. The ploy succeeded, and Elija was able to pick up a great deal of useful information, which he passed on to Winnie, not the police. Thanks to him, many of the young militants escaped arrest, and sometimes he hid them in his own house until the danger passed. The entire body of student leaders was on the run, and so were thousands of schoolchildren. Tsietsi Mashinini, the president of the SSRC, was among those who fled the country. He had become known as 'the little Mandela', and one newspaper even published a report suggesting that he bore such a close physical resemblance to Mandela that he might well be his illegitimate son.

During the weeks that Soweto was a war zone, Winnie and other prominent residents had their hands full. She went from one police station to another demanding the bodies of children who had been killed, spent hours comforting bereaved parents, arranged more funerals than any individual should ever have to, and coordinated the help that poured in, including donations of coffins. Taxi drivers ferried people to the burials free of charge. The violence had quickly spread to other townships, and it seemed as though the killing would never end.

The police blamed Winnie and Dr Motlana for inciting the students, and claimed they had been responsible for setting South Africa aflame. Winnie reacted by stating she could only wish she had so much influence, and Motlana lashed out at the Minister of Justice, Jimmy Kruger, describing him as a 'particularly stupid' man whose actions had aggravated the situation. A more perceptive politician, said Motlana, would have demanded that the police show more restraint. Winnie and other black leaders knew only too well that the uprising was a manifestation of deep-seated anger, fuelled by youthful indignation and reckless disregard for the traditional structure of a society that had short-changed its young.

The government put the number of dead in Soweto at 600, but Winnie estimated the fatalities at more than 1 000, mostly children, some younger than twelve. More than 4 000 people were injured, and thousands of youngsters fled into exile in neighbouring states. An untold number vanished into detention, and hundreds of parents never found out what had happened to their sons and daughters.

South Africa was at war with itself. Smoke from the fire started in Soweto drifted across the entire country and formed a large black cloud over the future of white South Africa. As Winnie and others had predicted, the anger was contagious, and by the end of 1976, few black townships had not been touched by violence, school and consumer boycotts, and the death of youthful militants. Winnie urged the Soweto Parents' Association to join forces with other organisations to form a national Black Parents' Association that could liaise with the children. She insisted that the onus was on the older generation to fight for their rights rather than leave it to the youth, and she remained steadfast in her opposition to the system that had bred the state of anarchy, declaring publicly: 'We shall fight to the bitter end for justice.'



It is an incredible thing, that you have this convergence. If you look at how faiths speak of what is the destiny of humankind, we Christians say that the ultimate *summum bonum* is when we enjoy the divine vision, the beatific vision forever and ever, but we will remain distinct although in relationship with the divine Trinity. Islam also speaks about the time when we will enjoy absolute blessedness in the presence of the divine One. Don't Hinduism and Buddhism, having recognized that we are part of the divine, speak about *Tat tvam asi,* "That thou art," believing that if you can recognize what you truly are—that you are an aspect of the divine and ultimately will return to what you came from—you will be reabsorbed into the divine? All this speaks volumes about what human beings are.

From: Archbishop Desmond Tutu

"God is not a Christian"

CHAPTER 2

Ubuntu

On the Nature of Human Community

Desmond Tutu's stature as an exemplar of tolerance and inclusiveness among international religious leaders is rooted not only in his faith but in his understanding of the nature of human community, to which he brings a uniquely African sensibility. What follows is a compilation of excerpts from presentations made over three decades in settings ranging from South African newspaper columns to speeches abroad.

In our African *weltanschauung,* our worldview, we have something called *ubuntu.* In Xhosa, we say, "Umntu ngumtu ngabantu." This expression is very difficult to render in English, but we could translate it by saying, "A person is a person through other persons."[1] We need other human beings for us to learn how to be human, for none of us comes fully formed into the world. We would not know how to talk, to walk, to think, to eat as human beings unless we

learned how to do these things from other human beings. For us, the solitary human being is a contradiction in terms.

Ubuntu is the essence of being human. It speaks of how my humanity is caught up and bound up inextricably with yours. It says, not as Descartes did, "I think, therefore I am" but rather, "I am because I belong." I need other human beings in order to be human. The completely self-sufficient human being is subhuman. I can be me only if you are fully you. I am because we are, for we are made for togetherness, for family. We are made for complementarity. We are created for a delicate network of relationships, of interdependence with our fellow human beings, with the rest of creation.

I have gifts that you don't have, and you have gifts that I don't have. We are different in order to know our need of each other. To be human is to be dependent. *Ubuntu* speaks of spiritual attributes such as generosity, hospitality, compassion, caring, sharing. You could be affluent in material possessions but still be without *ubuntu*. This concept speaks of how people are more important than things, than profits, than material possessions. It speaks about the intrinsic worth of persons as not dependent on extraneous things such as status, race, creed, gender, or achievement.

In traditional African society, *ubuntu* was coveted more than anything else—more than wealth as measured in cattle and the extent of one's land. Without this quality a prosperous man, even though he might have been a chief, was regarded as someone deserving of pity and even contempt. It was seen as what ultimately distinguished people from animals—the quality of being human and so also humane. Those who had *ubuntu* were compassionate

and gentle, they used their strength on behalf of the weak, and they did not take advantage of others—in short, they *cared,* treating others as what they were: human beings. If you lacked *ubuntu,* in a sense you lacked an indispensable ingredient of being human. You might have had much of the world's goods, and you might have had position and authority, but if you had no *ubuntu,* you did not amount to much. Today, *ubuntu* is still greatly admired, sought after, and cultivated. Only someone to whom something drastic has happened could ever say, as a South African government minister once said, that the death of Steve Biko[2]—the death of a fellow human being—left him cold. That minister had lost his humanity, or was well on the way to doing so.

Westerners have made spectacular advances largely because of their personal individual initiative. They have made remarkable technological advances, for example. And yet that progress has come at a huge cost. The West's emphasis on individualism has often meant that people are lonely in a crowd, shattered by their anonymity. This is what makes it possible for people to pass by on the other side while someone is, say, being gang-raped: the passersby simply do not want to become too involved. People in the West have been brought up in a culture of success, where stomach ulcers become status symbols. There is an obsession with achievement, and it seems it does not much matter in *what* you succeed as long as you *do* succeed. The worst thing that can happen, it appears, is to fail. And that culture easily dismisses people as expendable, discardable, when, because they are poor or unemployed, they are judged to have failed.

Ubuntu teaches us that our worth is intrinsic to who we are. We matter because we are made in the image of God. *Ubuntu* reminds us that we belong in one family—God's family, the human family. In our African worldview, the greatest good is communal harmony. Anything that subverts or undermines this greatest good is ipso facto wrong, evil. Anger and a desire for revenge are subversive of this good thing.

CHAPTER 3

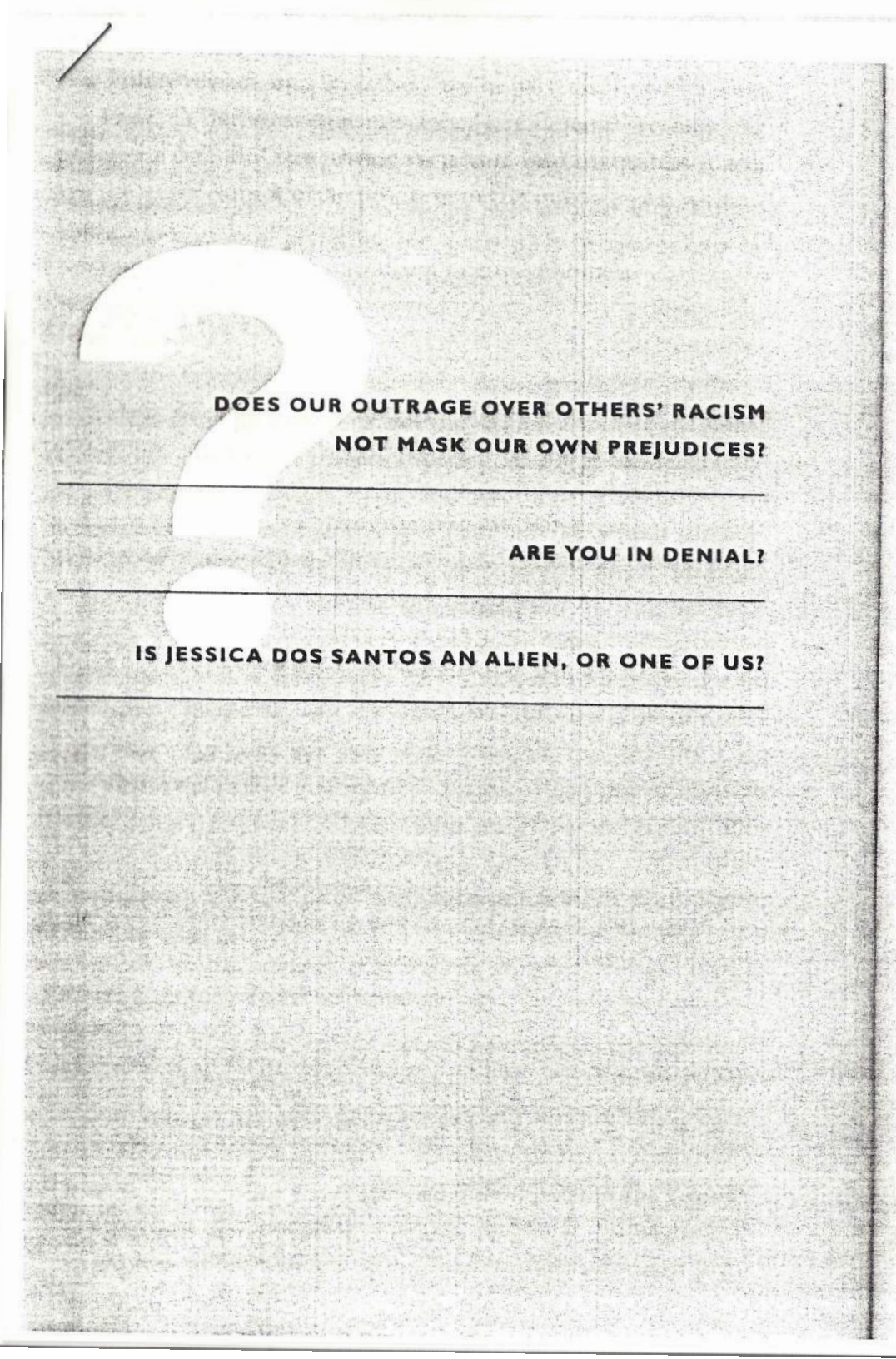
No Future Without Forgiveness

A Radical Program for Reconciliation

Desmond Tutu's advocacy of forgiveness by the victims of atrocity as a way to healing has repeatedly caused controversy, internationally as well as in South Africa, as the selections in this chapter illustrate.

1

The first time Tutu's views got him into trouble was during a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and Bethlehem over Christmas 1989.[1] During that pilgrimage, he visited Jerusalem's Holocaust museum, Yad Vashem, where he ended a comment in the guestbook with an appeal for God to "forgive all people who oppress others." This is what he then told journalists outside.



RACIAL BAGGAGE IN FOUR PART HARMONY

SKETCH ONE:

A couple of days ago I had a rather embarrassing experience. I was sitting at one of my favourite spots in Rosebank – popular coffee shop Ninos – overlooking the parking lot while waiting for my creative juices to kick in after a bout of writer's block. I got distracted by some noise, and looked up. Two women seemed to be having a fairly tense conversation. One of them seemed to have bumped the other's car. I didn't see the accident, so had no clue which one of them might have been in the wrong. As they exchanged numbers, their conversation, judging by the increasingly wild gesticulation, seemed to be getting more heated.

I instinctively found myself silently egging on the black lady, as one might anxiously hold thumbs for your favourite boxer in the ring. The Indian lady seemed louder – I could certainly hear her voice more clearly – and this made me nervous about whether or not my player in the road rage match was going to win the verbal warfare. But alas, the black lady, though also talking a lot, seemed more timid, and so I feared that she might come out of it all the worse for wear.

Why, you might wonder, did I instinctively side with her? Simply because she was black. I did not know her. I might never even meet her. For all I know, she could have been in the wrong, and hurled abuse at her Indian counterpart, thus deserving those loud protests. Yet, the fact that she was black was enough for her to get my sympathy and all my goodwill. There was no sympathy or goodwill, I'm afraid, for the person who looked less like me, the Indian lady.

SKETCH TWO:

A good friend of mine, Seth, confessed to me many years after we first met that he had a rather horrible thought the first time he saw me. He walked into my philosophy tutorial at the beginning of his university career and when he realised that I was the tutor, he thought, 'Oh dear, my luck to be assigned the incompetent black tutor.' That is the sort of confession one can only trot out if your friendship is more solid than the skull of a politician. I chuckled, and we laughed it off over a pint of lager – or three.

We didn't need to analyse the confession. It was obvious what was going on: my skin colour was assumed to be carrying information about me. And in this case, my black skin carried the warning, 'incompetent!' The onus was on me to disprove the assumption. Only white tutors could be assumed to be competent unless proven to be useless. It was the other way round for black tutors.

SKETCH THREE:

Jessica dos Santos is a name we didn't really know until early May 2012, but now her story has been filed in the annals of Twitter infamy. She is a white model who had an unfortunate encounter with a black guy who reportedly made unwelcome and unacceptable sexual advances towards her. She was so angry that she tweeted about the 'kaffir'. She was quickly, and ferociously, sanctioned by almost every South African on Twitter. One magazine, *FHM*, almost instantly stripped her of some title she had won under their banner, and made it clear they would never work with her in future. She experienced the virtual equivalent of having a ton of rotten tomatoes thrown at her.

Not even a breakfast function at which she attempted to reconcile with another thoughtless tweep, a black woman who retorted with unacceptable racism (suggesting that whites ought to have been killed), could salvage her bruised image. She became the symbol of all unexpressed and latent racism that might exist in every nook and cranny in our country. And everyone wanted to prove their progressive credentials by venting more angrily than other tweeps.

I encountered at least two responses that typified the engagement with Dos Santos's racism. One Facebook friend of mine gave me advice on my way to a recording for a television show on which I had been invited to appear to speak about the incident and its aftermath. My Facebook friend urged me to remind '*these* racists' that their racism was disgusting and that 'they' had no place in our society.

At a friend's birthday braai, the incident, inevitably, also became a topic of discussion at some point in the afternoon. One guest lamented, 'You know, I almost feel sorry for that white girl. She must have been raised in an incredibly closed and insulated community.'

The reactions of the online masses, and the reactions of my Facebook friend and my friend's braai guest, are intriguing: they suggest that racists are not us. Racists are alien. They are outliers in our society. They are not typical. They are a freak fact of our lives. If we could get rid of the three racists spoiling our rainbow image, we would be living in perfect racial harmony.

ue: 'Ebony and Ivory' ...)

I find this lie fascinating. Racists, in reality, are among us. We *are* the racists. 'They' are not from another planet. But we dare not indict ourselves.

SKETCH FOUR:

I was an obsessive competitive debater throughout my university career. And so when I arrived at Oxford University I was naturally drawn to the famous Oxford Debate Union. Probably the best part of my Oxford experience was the time spent growing as a debater, interacting with world-famous politicians and newsmakers. The Union was a space that was so well respected that, frankly, it was a feather in the career cap of anyone – even a state president – to be asked to speak there. But make no mistake, you had to know your stuff, lest the ambitious young Oxford lions, invariably wearing black tie, would offer you a lethal point of information or, worse, deliver paper speeches from the floor, that crushed your evidence or your reasoning. Fun stuff. Challenging stuff.

And so, in my first term at Oxford, I joined the Union and attended as many of the events as possible. During one of my first attendances, I found myself sitting in the main chamber of the Union. I do not recall the topic, but it was magnificent stuff with good opening speeches from both sides. Then it was the turn of a black guy who had been invited to the event.

As the man got up and walked up to the podium, I found myself thinking, 'Pleeeeeease don't fuck this up! Pleeeease be the best speaker!'

The basis of my mixture of fear and hope was simply that he was black. When the other speakers spoke, I had zero feelings about how they might or should perform. Whether they excelled or sank was neither here nor there. I had no stake in how well they might do that night. And yet, this stranger induced in me – purely because he was black – fear that he might not be up to the task at hand, and a simultaneous desire that he should deliver a speech worthy of a two-minute standing ovation.

Isn't it interesting that my racial affinity could do all this to me? Years later, I am not so sure if much has changed. I still, for example, find myself desperately wanting black debaters to beat white debaters in competition; not just because I happen to coach some of them, but because black excellence is far closer to my heart than white excellence. It is a reality that is found in every part of my psyche. It is, for example, more important to me that Pieter De Villiers, former Springbok rugby coach, should have a brilliant record as coach than it is important to me that one Jake White should have a brilliant record as national coach. What is the basis of my split loyalties? Pieter looks and sounds more like my dad and me than Jake White. (Well, actually, *no-one* sounds like Pieterjie!) That's how deep racial identity runs in me.

These four stories are variations on a theme: our racial baggage, as a nation recovering from a deeply racist past, is massive. Yet the way we deal with that past, in the present, is not very healthy.

First, we are in denial about the fact that racial identities are still very strong, and that they often form the basis of racial prejudices, and irrational racial affinities. Many of us who acknowledge this reality pull a different trick. We pretend the problem is small. Or we pretend that we never were, and never will be, part of the problem. The problem is out there. It is not in *my* home, in *my* heart, in *my* headspace.

This is why the collective outrage against Jessica's racist tweet is slightly less comforting than it might appear at first glance. On the one hand, it is great that we collectively punish a racist in our midst. It means we do not tolerate racism rearing its divisive head. But there was, on the other hand, something disturbingly

quick about the intense and voluminous reactions – something I am suspicious of.

My fear is that much of the outrage was less about Jessica's racism than about deflecting attention from our selves. No-one who came down hard on Jessica acknowledged their own racial baggage. The subtext of the criticism was clear, 'I am not Jessica. I am different.' And this is why my Facebook friend could so neatly distinguish between 'us' and 'them'. The 'us' refers to us innocent ones, and the 'them' refers to them racist bunch! But this is disingenuous.

The real difference, frankly, between Jessica and us is that she got busted and we did not. It is a little bit like our outrage when a famous person gets caught for drunken driving. It is easy to be outraged by that person's irresponsible behaviour. In reality, many thousands of South Africans drive over the legal limit every weekend and do not get stopped. Yet, with no hint of irony, these same offenders are often the first to throw stones in the direction of the busted one. It is a tactic that is aimed at drawing attention away from one's own behaviour. It is a lie we cannot afford to encourage in ourselves and in others.

The problem with pretending that we are oh-so-different from Jessica is unless we acknowledge the scope of the problem, we cannot deal with racism and racial baggage. That is why it is important that we examine our own lives, and not just preoccupy ourselves with spotting racism in others.

It is for the same reason that I introduced gentle disagreement into the braai conversation at my friend's house. I suggested that it was probably not true that Jessica grew up in a racist attic. But of course it is a wonderful fantasy. Since you and I live in amazingly progressive and cosmopolitan places, we never could have done what Jessica did, nor would we ever. After the attic, Jessica cannot handle the pristine multiracial space in which her modelling career has landed her. This is the logic underlying the other braai guest's casual suggestion that Jessica grew up in a closed community.

Again, we should be careful not to convince ourselves that racial baggage is a small problem out there. Jessica grew up in our communities. She is not one-of-a-kind. She is our friend, lover, sister, daughter and colleague. She is not an alien, and her birthplace is not Mars – it is in fact South Africa. She was born in 1992, and so cannot even be written off as a relic from Verwoerdian days. She is a proverbial 'born free' – but, not quite. Rather, born into racial baggage. Like all of us.

We dare not pretend our racial issues are over and done with, or negligible. Jessica is one of us.

It is also evident that besides racial prejudice, racial identity runs deeper than we like to believe. This is not even necessarily a poisonous truth and yet we deny it. There is no inherent harm in my quiet desire to see black debaters excel. In fact, given the historic educational inequities that partly explain why no black African has won the South African National Debate Championship (at the time of writing this book), one might even say that my passion for disproportionately focusing my coaching energy on black debaters, is sensible. Yet how many of us would own up to be motivated by race in this fairly innocuous sense? Few of us, because we have closed the space in which we can be open about our racial identities.

My experience of the two brawling women in the Rosebank Mall parking lot is not exceptional. When I tested my story with many friends less 'race-obsessed' than me, a familiar smile ran across their faces – they recognised the story instantly. I got the same reaction to my tale about the black speaker at Oxford. There seems to be a kind of trope here that is unsurprising. If I grew up in a community that was predominantly black, and had my first

real interracial contact, socially, at my former whites-only high school, then it isn't surprising that I should have racial loyalties. It would be more surprising if I did not.

Yet we run away from these realities. We pretend it is only Eusebius who sees race everywhere – him and his handful of race-obsessed friends. But, how many South Africans reading this essay do not have friends or lovers predominantly from the same racial group? How many people reading this essay grew up in racially integrated neighbourhoods? How many of us, unlike the old white landlady in Sandton, could comfortably live with people who do not look like us? We have tighter social bonds with people of our own racial make-up than those who do not share the randomness of skin colour.

The story of multiracial, rainbow nation bliss is grossly exaggerated. We are not there, and we will take longer to get there if we convince ourselves that we have already arrived. We haven't. If someone like my friend Seth didn't own up to the fact that he took my skin colour as an indication of whether or not I was competent, then how could Seth ever have confronted his own racial stereotyping? It is only by acknowledging, in the first instance, that the racial challenges start with our individual selves that we have a fighting chance of achieving that elusive non-racial South Africa we chant about more often than we bother to work at creating.

And this is why I am grateful that Jessica put up her racist hand and demanded our attention. In the end it is the Jessicas of this world who keep us brutally honest.