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Fact Sheet – Desmond Tutu ***Annotated with key events in South Africa***

October 7, 1931: Desmond Mpilo Tutu born to Zachariah Zelilo Tutu, a high school headmaster, and Aletta Tutu, a domestic worker, in Klerksdorp, a small city in the Transvaal (North West Province) of South Africa about 100 miles southwest of Johannesburg. He soon becomes the middle child, between older sister Sylvia and younger sister Gloria. An early childhood attack of polio permanently damages the muscles in his right hand.

As a small boy a signal moment occurs when he witnesses a white man – a priest – tip his hat to his mother. This alternative view of racial discrimination instills in him the notion of religion as a powerful tool for effecting racial equality.

1936: The family moves to Tshing, a black suburb of Ventersdorp, north of Klerksdorp.

1943: The family moves to Johannesburg.

1947: While living in the Johannesburg suburb of Sophiatown, a rich center of black culture where property ownership for blacks was legal, he contracts a near fatal case of tuberculosis, spending more than 18 months in a sanitarium and inspiring his ambition to become a doctor.

1948: *National Party begins more than four decades of South African rule and soon remakes the nation's de facto practice of racial segregation into the official national policy of apartheid.*

1950: Graduates from Johannesburg Bantu High School. Though accepted into medical school, he is unable to afford tuition and opts to study education at Pretoria Bantu Normal College.

The nation begins officially classifying its population by race, with enforcement via the Group Areas Act, the first of many laws to restrict developed urban areas to whites only and severely limit movement of the non-white majority. Restrictions include requirements to carry pass books to cross into white areas. Simultaneous government moves to smother opposition, including the banning of the Communist Party, spur the African National Congress (ANC), led by Nelson Mandela, to respond with a campaign of civil disobedience.

1953: Receives teaching diploma from Pretoria Bantu Normal College.

The Bantu Education Act (later renamed the Black Education Act) legalizes segregation of institutions of higher learning, and also strips the remaining non-white colleges of governmental funding, effectively establishing a national policy to force non-whites into blue collar and service employment.

1954: Receives Bachelor of Arts from the University of South Africa (Unisa). Returns to Johannesburg Bantu High School, his alma mater, to teach English and history.

1955: Marries Nomalizo Leah Shenxane, a teacher who had been taught by his father. They have four children: Trevor Thamsanqa (1956), Theresa Thandeka (1957), Naomi Nontombi (1960) and Mpho Andrea (1963). Begins teaching at Krugersdorp High School at Johannesburg's western edge.

Forced removals of the residents of Sophiatown begin; the city is flattened and eliminated by 1963.

1957: Quits teaching in protest against the deteriorating standard of black education resulting from the Bantu Education Act, whose provisions include a reduction in school hours by one-third, to only three hours daily.

1958: Enters Anglican ministry by enrolling at St. Peter's Theological College in Rosettenville.

1960: Receives Licentiate of Theology from St. Peter's and ordained as a deacon.

The Pan African Congress (PAC) upstages an anti-pass law demonstration planned for late March by the ANC. On March 21, approximately 6,000 gather in front of the police station in Sharpeville in the northeast region of South Africa and demand that police arrest them for not carrying pass books. After a day of agitation, police officers fire into the unarmed crowd, killing 69 and setting off nationwide unrest that leads to a ban on the ANC and PAC and the round-up of more than 18,000 people.

Forced resettlement to black "homelands" begins, eventually affecting some 3.5 million black South Africans.

1961: Ordained to priesthood in Johannesburg.

South Africa declares itself a republic and leaves the British Commonwealth. Mandela becomes head of the ANC military wing and launches a campaign of sabotage to undermine the government.

1962: Enrolls at King's College, University of London with a scholarship from the World Council of Churches. Serves as part-time curate at churches in Golders Green and Bletchingley, Surrey.

1964: *Nelson Mandela convicted of sabotage and other crimes and sentenced to life in prison, most of it served in an isolated cell on Robben Island, off the Western Cape.*

1965: Receives Bachelor of Divinity Honors degree from King's College.

1966: Receives Master of Theology degree from King's College.

1967: Returns to South Africa. Teaches at the Federal Theological Seminary and is chaplain at the University of Fort Hare in Alice in the Eastern Cape. During this period his lectures often highlight the lack of quality education for black South Africans.

1968: He witnesses for the first time a brutal police response to a peaceful protest when officers attack Fort Hare students with dogs and tear gas.

1970: Appointed lecturer in the department of theology at the National University of Lesotho, the landlocked country surrounded by South Africa.

1972: After an initial, unexplained refusal, receives a passport enabling a return to England as Associate Director for Africa of the Theological Education Fund of the World Council of Churches, which provides grants to theological institutions and students. Over the next three years he makes 48 visits to 25 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. He is also influenced during this time by the emerging philosophies of black consciousness and black theology.

1973: First visit to the United States includes preaching at New York City's influential Riverside Church.

1975: Appointment as the first black Anglican Dean of Johannesburg provides an international platform as a leading voice in the anti-apartheid movement.

1976, Spring: Only six months into his term, he is asked to stand for election as Bishop of Lesotho, a post he accepts reluctantly.

Writes a 2600-word letter to Prime Minister John Vorster pleading for meaningful changes in government policy including allowing blacks to live in urban areas and repealing the pass laws. He predicts "that unless something drastic is done very soon then bloodshed and violence are going to happen in South Africa almost inevitably." His letter is inadvertently published in a Durban newspaper after he shares it with a reporter, and Vorster's response is never released.

On June 16, high school students in Soweto, a non-white suburb of Johannesburg, leave their schools in protest of a government crackdown to enforce compulsory use of Afrikaans as the official language, along with English, in non-white schools. The police fire on the protestors, murdering several scores of young people (estimates range from more than 175 to as many as 700.) The deaths trigger national unrest and world condemnation.

1976, September: Preaches at the funeral of black consciousness advocate Steve Biko, who had died from brain injuries suffered during a police interrogation that included clubbing and blunt head trauma. Authorities pinned his death on a self-imposed hunger strike.

1978: Appointed General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches (SACC), giving him backing in his work against apartheid from nearly all the nation's churches.

Steps up his advocacy for foreign disinvestment from South Africa, causing concern within the SACC of overreach. His increasing political activism also becomes worrisome to the government which responds with a campaign of surveillance against him and the churches. Authorities twice revoke his passport. The repression only serves to increase his international profile in the fight against apartheid.

1980: Briefly jailed following a protest march. Despite his rejection of the government's policies, he maintains staunch opposition to violent tactics, leading him to sometimes also criticize the actions of the ANC.

1982: After the return of his passport, travels to ten countries in Europe and North America, meeting with government and church officials, and UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim.

1983: Named Patron of the United Democratic Front (UDF), a non-racial coalition of 400 civic, church, students' and workers' organizations. Along with the ANC and the Congress of South African Trade Unions, the coalition calls for a multiracial democracy led by the ANC. His leadership in the SACC helps the UDF garner support in the white community.

1984: Receives Nobel Peace Prize for his "role as a unifying leader figure in the campaign to resolve the problem of apartheid in South Africa." This accolade helps cement the anti-apartheid movement as an international cause.

Late in the year, meets with U.S. President Ronald Reagan who has staked out a position of "constructive engagement" to coax South Africa away from apartheid. The policy opposes economic and military sanctions. Reagan's efforts, and those of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, provide powerful support for the regime on the international stage. During the same visit to Washington, he denounces "constructive engagement" as immoral and "evil" as apartheid itself. Reagan, however, holds fast.

1985: Elected Bishop of Johannesburg. Resigns as patron of UDF. Meets with UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher who, like Reagan, refuses to concede the necessity of sanctions.

Following a series of internal boycotts and increased violence nationwide, President PW Botha declares a state of emergency in numerous areas of the country.

1986: Elevated to Archbishop of Cape Town becoming the first black cleric to lead the Anglican Church in South Africa.

Botha extends state of emergency nationwide. U.S. Congress passes the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act. Republican President Ronald Reagan vetoes the bill but the Republican-controlled Senate overrides the veto, and the policy of constructive engagement is officially replaced with economic and military sanctions. U.S. progress against apartheid helps prod Europe and Japan to also extend sanctions.

1987: Serves as president of the All Africa Conference of Churches, until 1997.

National Union of Mineworkers strike for three weeks.

1988: *Three-day general strike in June paralyzes the country.*

1989: *South African president P.W. Botha, a fierce supporter of racial segregation, suffers a stroke and is replaced by F.W. de Klerk.*

Following another general strike in August, the nationwide "Defiance Campaign" gains momentum. Police respond to protesters in Cape Town on September 2 with water cannons shooting purple-dyed water.

Despite no official mandate but convinced he is following the will of God, calls for a protest on September 13. After an estimated 30,000 march in Cape Town, massive peace marches with participants of all races break out in Johannesburg, Durban, and throughout the country, with Anglican bishops often leading the throngs.

De Klerk soon moves to defuse the crisis by meeting with Mandela, desegregating many public facilities, lifting the ban on the ANC and freeing many of its imprisoned activists. De Klerk's actions will eventually lead to his sharing of the Nobel Peace Prize with Nelson Mandela in 1993.

1990, February: *De Klerk announces that the government will free Nelson Mandela from prison. Nine days later, the once-young warrior emerges from his cell on Robben Island as an international symbol of justice.*

1991: *Multi-party negotiations begin to implement a non-apartheid government. Following the elimination of the remaining apartheid laws, international economic sanctions are lifted.*

1993: *On the day before Easter, Chris Hani, the widely admired general secretary of the South African Communist Party, is assassinated by an anticommunist zealot, and the country once again borders on anarchy. Between Mandela's release and the first democratic elections in 1994, more than 14,000 South Africans die in political violence.*

Preaches at Hani's funeral, and by invoking Paul's letter to the Romans, "If God be for us, who can be against us," assures the 120,000 gathered outside Soweto at the country's largest stadium that they, the "rainbow people of God" are "moving to freedom and nobody can stop us... for God is on our side."

1994: *South Africa's first multi-ethnic democratic elections bring the ANC to power, with Nelson Mandela as its first black leader in modern times. After a 20-year exclusion from the United Nations, the country is accepted back into the General Assembly.*

1995: Appointed to chair the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) by Nelson Mandela. The TRC eventually employs more than 300 people under three committees: 1) Investigate human rights abuses from the Sharpeville massacre of 1960 until Mandela's inauguration in 1994; 2) Decide on amnesty for the perpetrators of those crimes; and 3) Recommend reparations for the victims.

1996: Retires as Archbishop of Cape Town.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission begins hearings on abuses and crimes, including those committed by the ruling National Party, representing the apartheid government, by the newly-elected African National Congress, and by others. Tutu advocates and implements a three-stage model of “restorative justice” that aims to trade justice for truth with those testifying before the commission. Grounded in the intrinsic humanity of the African tradition of Ubuntu, the process calls for confession of responsibility for the abuses of apartheid, forgiveness by the victims of that abuse, and restitution, where possible, from those abusers to the victims. The ultimate goal is full-fledged rehabilitation for all: human rights abusers to regain their humanity and those abused to be empowered to shed their victimhood.

1997: Successfully treated for prostate cancer in the U.S.

1998: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission delivers its 3500-page final report to Mandela on October 28 despite the ANC’s last-minute attempts to prevent its release.

2002: His comments on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in *The Guardian*, *The Nation* and other publications draw on his experience with South Africa’s modern history, giving his description of Israel’s presence in the West Bank as “apartheid” a particular sting. Referring to the non-violent methods he advocated against apartheid, he asks the international community to divest from Israel until it withdraws to its 1967 borders. evoking a furor from, among others, the Chief Rabbi of South Africa and the American Jewish Committee. Former ANC activists, the South African government and the Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa endorse his efforts.

2003: As part of his lifelong commitment and firsthand experience to aligning human rights with the advancement of public health, establishes the Desmond Tutu HIV Centre in Cape Town and the Desmond Tutu TB Centre at Stellenbosch University.

2004: In the annual Nelson Mandela Lecture in Johannesburg, criticizes the ruling ANC government, led by President Thabo Mbeki, for its policies on poverty, AIDS, Zimbabwe and the empowerment and enrichment of a new black elite.

Among his many media and film appearances, he performs in the off-Broadway play *Guantanamo: Honor Bound to Defend Freedom* as a British judge who questions the handling of detainees at the U.S.-run facility in Cuba.

2007: With Nelson Mandela and his wife Graça Machel, convenes The Elders, a group of former global leaders now independent of any national governmental alliance or other vested interest working for peace and human rights. Serves as chair to fellow members Kofi Annan (United Nations), Martti Ahtisaari (Finland), Ela Bhatt (India), Lakhdar Brahimi (Algeria), Gro Harlem Brundtland (Norway), Fernando H. Cardoso (Brazil), Jimmy Carter (U.S.), and Mary Robinson (Ireland).

2008: With the Rockefeller Foundation, launches global eHealth initiative using information and communications technology to improve the performance of health systems worldwide.

Condemns xenophobic violence across South Africa directed at Zimbabweans, Malawians and Mozambicans.

2009: Awarded Presidential Medal of Freedom, America’s highest civilian honor, by President Barack Obama.

2010: Noting that “too much of my time has been spent at airports and in hotels,” retires from public life. Conspicuously, however, continues work with The Elders, the Desmond & Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation, and numerous other organizations, and redoubles efforts to speak out on human rights issues around the world.

2011: The Elders create “Girls not Brides: The Global Partnership to End Child Marriage.”

2012: *Police attack striking workers at a platinum mine in Marikana, South Africa, killing 34 and injuring dozens.*

Criticizes South African politicians for greed, failing schools and the “nightmare” of the Marikana mine massacre during an impromptu speech at a book launch in Cape Town.

Receives an ad-hoc \$1 million prize from the Mo Ibrahim Foundation “in recognition of his lifelong commitment to speaking truth to power.”

Meets with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at the United Nations as part of The Elders’ “International Day of the Girl Child” campaign to end child marriage.

2013: Urges Ugandan parliament to vote against the Anti-Homosexuality Bill, comparing its proposed criminalization of homosexual sex with the punishable offenses of intimate relations between blacks and whites under apartheid.

With Bill and Melinda Gates and some 100 charities, faith groups and aid organizations, launches “Enough Food for Everyone IF” campaign to end hunger in the developing world.

April 4, 2013: Announced as the 2013 Templeton Prize Laureate.

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