



## Richard Rohr's Daily Meditation



Abernathy children (Donzaleigh, Ralph David, and Juandalynn) march on the front line, followed by Dr. and Mrs. Martin Luther King, leading the Selma to Montgomery March in 1965, [Abernathy Family Photos](#).

## Modern Peacemakers

### **Desmond Tutu: Economy of Grace**

Friday, October 30, 2015

*Forgiveness is an absolute necessity for continued human existence.* --Desmond Tutu [1]

Desmond Tutu (b. 1931) is the first black Archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa, and has used his position to defend human rights, fighting poverty, homophobia, racism, and sexism. Tutu's work is grounded in his belief that all humans are beloved of God and deserving of respect and forgiveness.

The economy of grace was exemplified in Desmond Tutu's "Truth and Reconciliation Commission" in South Africa after the fall of

apartheid, where all had to take proper and public responsibility for their mistakes, not for the sake of any punishment but for the sake of truth and healing. In fact, the healing was the baring--and the bearing--of the truth publicly. This is revolutionary and unheard of in human history but is actually quite biblical, starting with the prophet Ezekiel during and after the Exile, and dramatically lived out by Jesus. Ezekiel laid the biblical groundwork for truth-speaking, accountability, and restorative justice. For him, the cement that holds the whole thing together is Yahweh being true to Yahweh's Self, and not merely reacting to human failure. [2]

Tutu spoke eloquently and emphatically about God's love, the very basic quality of God's character. Tutu couldn't conceive of a God who wasn't love. He has said, "I would not worship a God who is homophobic." From Tutu's sermon at All Saints Church in Pasadena:

[God's] family has no outsiders. Everyone is an insider. When Jesus said, "I, if I am lifted up, will draw. . . ." Did he say, "I will draw some, and tough luck for the others"? He said, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all." All! All! All! - Black, white, yellow; rich, poor; clever, not so clever; beautiful, not so beautiful. All! All! It is radical. All! Saddam Hussein, Osama bin Laden, Bush - all! All! . . . Gay, lesbian, so-called "straight;" all! All! All are to be held in the incredible embrace of the love that won't let us go. [3]

In 2010, I was invited to meet with Tutu in Cape Town. He told me

that he--and I--were mere "lightbulbs." We get all the credit and seem to be shining brightly for all to see, but we both know that if this lightbulb were to be unscrewed from its source for even a moment, the brightness would immediately stop. He laughed hilariously afterwards, and gave me a wink of understanding. [4]

Not only are we connected to our Divine Source, but we are interdependent--or "quantumly entangled," as we'll explore in a couple weeks--with others. Tutu explains the beautiful Nguni Bantu (from Southern Africa) word *ubuntu*, which roughly translates "human kindness" or, as Tutu says, "the essence of being human":

Ubuntu speaks particularly about the fact that you can't exist as a human being in isolation. It speaks about our interconnectedness. You can't be human all by yourself, and when you have this quality--Ubuntu--you are known for your generosity. We think of ourselves far too frequently as just individuals, separated from one another, whereas you are connected and what you do affects the whole world. When you do well, it spreads out; it is for the whole of humanity. [5]

We don't need to be stingy once we live inside the Gospel. We now enjoy a world of Abundance and Infinite Source. That pretty much changes everything.

### **Gateway to Silence**

"Be the change you wish to see in the world." --Gandhi

### **References:**

[1] Desmond Tutu, as quoted by Dalene Fuller Rogers and Harold G. Koenig in *Pastoral Care for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: Healing the Shattered Soul* (Routledge: 2002), 31.

[2] Adapted from Richard Rohr, *Breathing Under Water: Spirituality and the Twelve Steps*, (Franciscan Media: 2011), 40.

[3] Desmond Tutu, "And God Smiles," sermon preached at All Saints Church, Pasadena, California, 6 November 2005.

[4] Adapted from Richard Rohr, *On the Threshold of Transformation: Daily Meditations for Men* (Loyola Press: 2010), 352.

[5] Desmond Tutu, Ubuntu Women Institute USA, [uwi-usa.blogspot.be/2012/01/ubuntu-brief-meaning-of-african-word.html](http://uwi-usa.blogspot.be/2012/01/ubuntu-brief-meaning-of-african-word.html) .

### **CAC's newsletter, *the Mendicant*, is now online!**

In the October issue:

- "Franciscan Mysticism: A Cosmic Vision" by Richard Rohr
- A poem by Carolyn Metzler in honor of the 2013-2015 Living School students
- Spotlight on Anjuli Seth Nayak
- A key to reading Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment

Read the Mendicant at [cac.org/about-cac/newsletter](http://cac.org/about-cac/newsletter)

## **2015 Daily Meditation Theme**

Richard Rohr's meditations this year explore his "Wisdom Lineage," the teachers, texts, and traditions that have most influenced his spirituality. Read an introduction to the year's theme and view a list of the elements of Fr. Richard's lineage in CAC's January newsletter, *the Mendicant*.

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